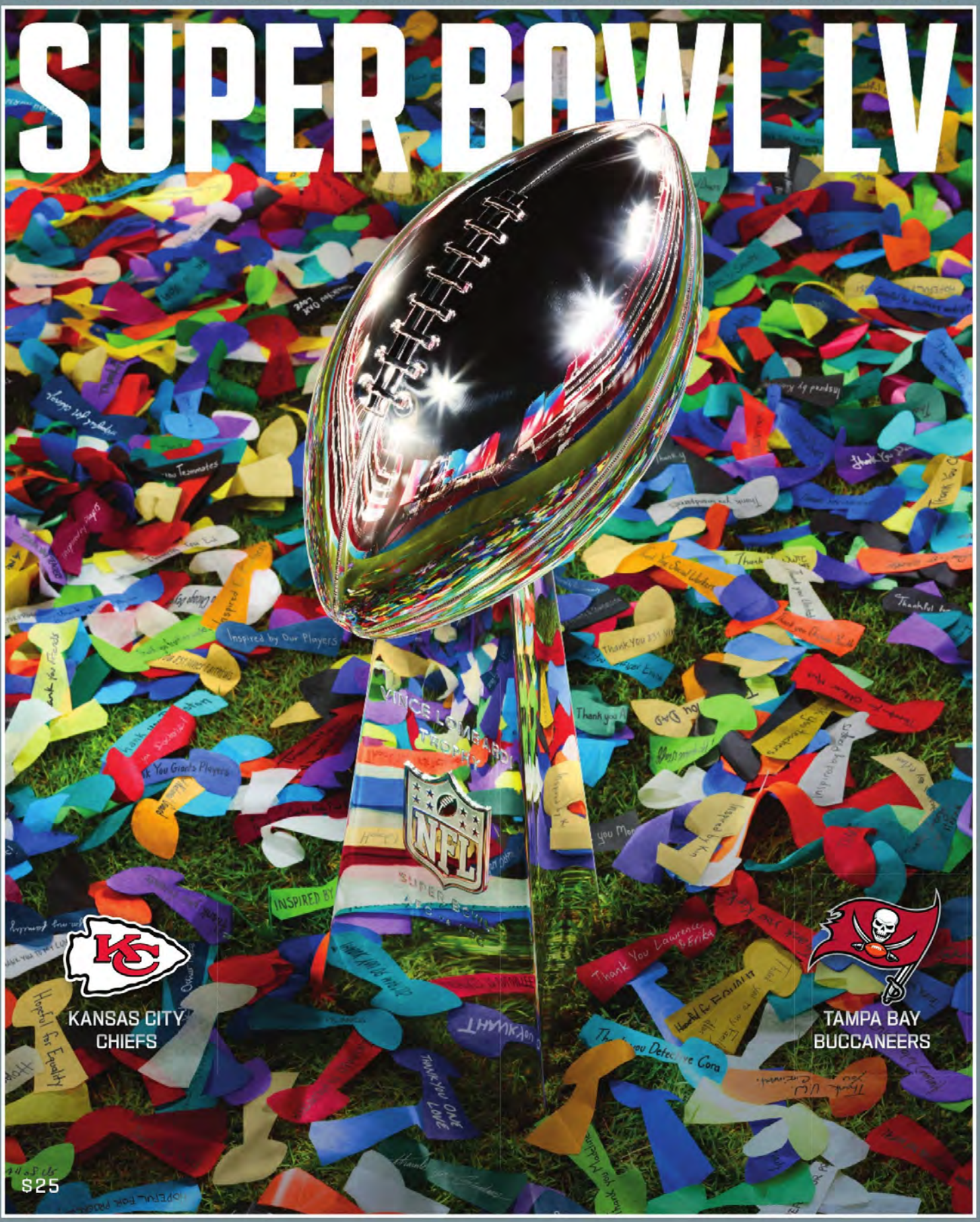
AFC VS NFC FOR THE NFL CHAMPIONSHIP AND THE VINCE LOMBARDI TROPHY

SUPER BOWL LV



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2021 E 350 Sedan shown in Mojave Silver metallic paint with optional equipment. ©2021 Mercedes-Benz USA, LLC

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SUPER BOWL LV

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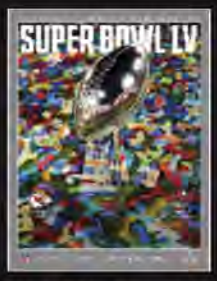

It Takes All of Us. *In a year unlike any other, our cover relays messages of gratitude and hope. The confetti that surrounds the Vince Lombardi Trophy has messages from fans of all 32 clubs, which thank those who have helped unite, heal, and persevere through one of the most challenging times in our nation's history. Photography by* ***Fabian Ohrm****. Creative direction and design by NFL Creative.*

Raymond James Stadium Seating Chart

Super Bowl Code of Conduct

ALL FANS AND STAFF MUST WEAR A FACE COVERING AT ALL TIMES. FANS WILL BE ALLOWED TO REMOVE FACE COVERINGS ONLY WHILE ACTIVELY EATING AND/OR DRINKING.

THE NFL IS COMMITTED TO CREATING A SAFE, COMFORTABLE, AND ENJOYABLE EXPERIENCE FOR ALL FANS. AS SUCH, FANS ARE REQUIRED TO REFRAIN FROM THE FOLLOWING:

- Behavior that is unruly, disruptive, or illegal in nature
- Intoxication or other signs of drug or alcohol impairment that result in irresponsible behavior
- Offensive language or obscene gestures, to include the use of such language or gestures concerning a person's race, ethnicity, color, gender, religion, creed, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, or national origin; or to instigate, incite, or encourage a confrontation or physical assault
- Interference with the progress of the game (including throwing objects on the field and any unauthorized entry to the field of play)
- Failing to follow instruction of Super Bowl personnel
- Verbal or physical harassment of any other fan or person
- Violations of any stadium policies, local City of Tampa ordinances, state, or federal laws

Need assistance?
Fans who are subjected to unruly fans or witness violations of the Code of Conduct can call the Guest Service Hotline at **(813) 350-6501** or text **SBLV** to **69050** with their issue and location. Fans may also visit one of the Super Bowl Guest Services offices located on the main concourse near sections 119, 127, and 144; on the upper concourse near sections 310 and 336; and in the club lobbies by the entrance and club lounges next to the escalators.

2020: WHAT A SEASON!

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2021 GLA 250 shown in Denim Blue metallic paint. Optional equipment shown. ©2021 Mercedes-Benz USA, LLC

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THE CHIEFS AND THE BUCCANEERS OVERCAME ALL CHALLENGERS TO ARRIVE AT SUPER BOWL LV IN TAMPA BAY

PASSING THE TEST

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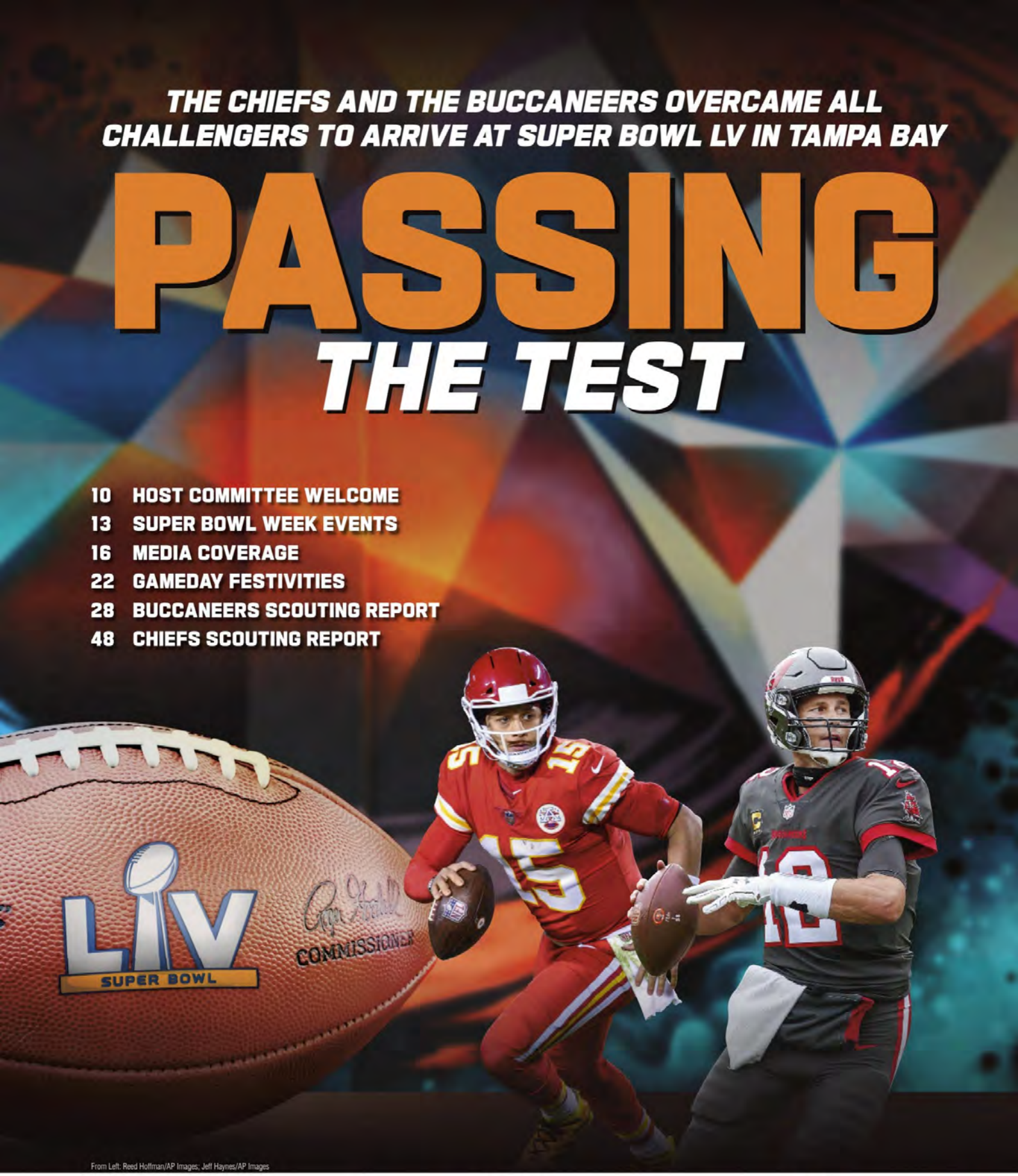
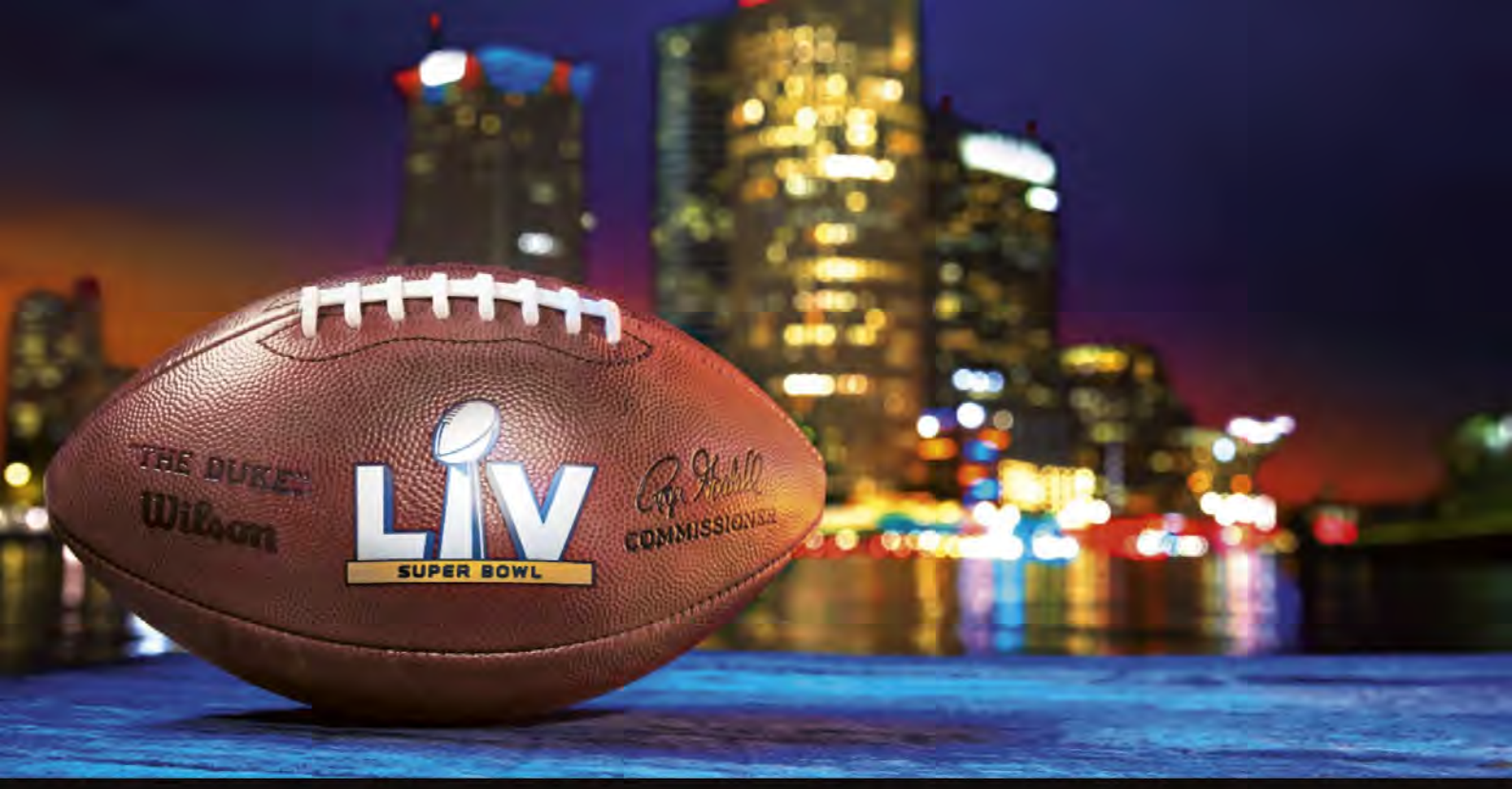


From Left: Reed Hoffman/AP Images; Jeff Haynes/AP Images

PATRICK MAHOMES
KANSAS CITY CHIEFS

TOM BRADY
TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS



WELCOME TO TAMPA BAY

LIV SUPER BOWL

On behalf of the Tampa Bay Super Bowl LV Host Committee, our community stakeholders, and dedicated partners, we welcome you to Tampa Bay for Super Bowl LV. When we were first awarded this coveted opportunity, our mission was clear: to raise the bar for the fan experience and showcase our destination's recent progress and exciting future, all while delivering a fifth world-class Super Bowl to Tampa Bay. Although our goal has never wavered, Super Bowl LV's level of importance certainly has. Given the unprecedented circumstances over the past year, this has suddenly become the most important Super Bowl of our lifetime.

During your stay, we're excited for you to see our ever-evolving downtown footprint, almost unrecognizable from our last hosting efforts in 2009. We hope you will take in the memories made at Super Bowl Experience presented by Lowe's along our 2.7-mile long Riverwalk, the first fan festival hosted anywhere in nearly a year, in addition to patronizing our many incredible local restaurants in the area and newly developed hotels.

During our planning efforts, we have watched our community come together like never before for Super Bowl LV, and as a result, the event is already having an unprecedented amount of social impact throughout our area. The Tampa Bay Super Bowl LV Host Committee, in tandem with our great friends at the NFL, have made a $2 million commitment to our hometown through our *Forever 55* social legacy program, focusing on six areas of need in our community, including Early Childhood Education, Food Insecurity, Families, Health and Wellness, Sustainability, and Systemic Justice. With intentional planning and input from strategic partners, we have implemented a strategic plan that ensures that Super Bowl LV not only positively affects the community for the 55 days leading up to the big game, but also leaves an everlasting impact long after the confetti settles.

We hope you feel the sense of pride our community has for hosting major events; from the warmth of our weather to the warmth of our people, Tampa Bay welcomes visitors with open arms. While we love hosting any Super Bowl, the unprecedented impact that this Super Bowl will have on the Tampa Bay region will be one for the record books.

Thank you so much for visiting our community, and we hope you will make plans to come back and see us soon!

Rob Higgins

Rob Higgins
President/Chief Executive Officer,
Tampa Bay Super Bowl LV Host Committee

TAMPA BAY HOST OF SUPER BOWL LV

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Inspiring Change. Instilling Hope. United under six pillars, including Food Insecurity, Sustainability, Early Childhood Education, Families, Health and Wellness, and Systemic Justice, the Tampa Bay Super Bowl LV Host Committee *Forever 55* legacy program is dedicated to leaving an everlasting impact in the Tampa Bay community.

FORWARD. FOREVER. TOGETHER.

UNPRECEDENTED. IT WAS A WORD repeatedly used to describe 2020.

As Tampa Bay prepares to host its fifth Super Bowl, there is no doubt that this season has been different. The impact of the coronavirus extended beyond immediate health concerns, affecting nearly everyone in our community. It intensified the economic hardship and health consequences for many in Tampa Bay. While, so often, the Super Bowl consists of the glitz and glamour of large-scale events or the roaring crowd at the game, this year will be unlike any we've seen before.

But even during our nation's most trying times, sports have been a unifier, an uplifting voice, and a force for meaningful change. They embody the resilience of the community. So, in the wake of a year that has changed our landscape, the Tampa Bay Super Bowl LV Host Committee recognized and maximized an opportunity to answer the community's greatest needs with a Legacy Program built to inspire change and instill hope by launching *Forever 55*.

Together, the NFL and the Tampa Bay Super Bowl LV Host Committee, alongside community and civic partners, collaborated in intentional and strategic ways to create, implement, and support sustainable initiatives throughout our community. While past Legacy Grants have traditionally funded brick-and-mortar projects, this year's $2 million investment focused on programs and initiatives serving need-based families and underrepresented communities. The Host Committee identified six pillars, including Food Insecurity, Sustainability, Early Childhood Education, Families, Health and Wellness, and Systemic Justice.

Each pillar is positioned to help be a part of the solution, championing efforts that bridge equity gaps, laying the foundation for improved lives, and influencing long-lasting transformative change.

To help address **Food Insecurity** in the Tampa Bay community, *Forever 55* funded the installation of 55+ food carts at Title 1 Schools in Hillsborough, Pinellas, and Pasco counties, increasing access to more than 5 million meals for students. As part of the overall **Sustainability** efforts, multiple greening projects focused on restoring Tampa Bay's shoreline throughout Hillsborough and Pinellas counties. Strategic partners helped identify 55 local, need-based **Families** to receive direct funding and wraparound services to assist with transitioning to self-sufficiency. To address the nearly 52 percent of babies born into poverty-stricken homes, *Forever 55* launched First 1000 Days, an **Early Childhood Education** pilot initiative to provide a system of care for newborn children and their mothers. In partnership with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, a **Health and Wellness** program launched in East Tampa to support and promote students' physical and social emotional well-being in low to moderate-income communities. During a time of racial and civil unrest, *Forever 55* invested in creating **Systemic Justice** solutions, promoting awareness, hosting courageous conversations, and advocating for reforms.

On the sport's grandest stage exists the capacity to inspire hope and effect change. This year, that opportunity is more powerful than ever. Through *Forever 55*, the Tampa Bay Super Bowl LV Host Committee, the NFL, and its partners ensure that the impact of Super Bowl LV extends well beyond gameday, moving the community Forward. Forever. Together.

SUPER BOWL EXPERIENCE PRESENTED BY LOWE'S

SUPER BOWL EXPERIENCE PRESENTED BY LOWE'S – the NFL's interactive football theme park – will return to Tampa for Super Bowl LV from Friday, Jan. 29, through Sunday, Jan. 31, and from Wednesday, Feb. 3, through Saturday, Feb. 6, along the Tampa Riverwalk. Admission is free.

To celebrate the history of the NFL, Super Bowl Experience will offer fans the opportunity to virtually meet and greet with current NFL players and Legends, participate in games, and shop merchandise from NFL Shop presented by Visa.

Super Bowl Experience will also feature photos with the Vince Lombardi Trophy, a 40-yard dash and vertical jump against NFL players on LED screens, and a Super Bowl rings display showcasing all 54 Super Bowl rings!

For entrance, fans need to register for the NFL OnePass app **(NFL.com/OnePass)** and book a session date/time. If the session date/time that you are looking for is not available, there will be a standby queue available for walk-up fans at Julian B. Lane River Park, but fans will still need OnePass to access. For fans without a smartphone, Technology Managers will be at the exterior of Julian B. Lane to assist.

Additionally, fans should bring their favorite face covering and prepare to maintain at least six feet of physical distance from others. For more information on Super Bowl Health & Safety protocols, visit **SuperBowl.com**.

LV EXPERIENCE presented by Lowe's

HOURS OF OPERATION

Friday, Jan. 29.....5 p.m.- 10 p.m.
Saturday, Jan. 30.....10 a.m. - 10 p.m.
Sunday, Jan. 31.....10 a.m. - 8 p.m.
Monday, Feb. 1.....**CLOSED**
Tuesday, Feb. 2.....**CLOSED**
Wednesday, Feb. 3.....3 p.m. - 10 p.m.
Thursday, Feb. 4.....3 p.m. - 10 p.m.
Friday, Feb. 5.....10 a.m. - 10 p.m.
Saturday, Feb. 6.....10 a.m. - 10 p.m.

NFL SHOP

presented by VISA

MAIN STORE

NFL SHOP – Super Bowl Experience
Julian B. Lane Park
(Same hours as Super Bowl Experience)

SATELLITE STORES

NFL SHOP – Super Bowl Experience
Curtis Hixon Park
(Same hours as Super Bowl Experience)

Embassy Suites Tampa Downtown Convention Center NFL Shop
513 S. Florida Ave., Tampa
Feb. 2-8
10 a.m. - 8 p.m. daily

One Pass App Store Pickup & Shop Knights Point (Near Jackson's Restaurant)
601 S. Harbour Island Blvd.,
Suite 104, Tampa
Friday, Jan. 29.....11 a.m. - 9 p.m.
Saturday, Jan. 30.....11 a.m. - 8 p.m.
Sunday, Jan. 31.....11 a.m.-7 p.m.
Monday, Feb. 1.....12 noon - 5 p.m.
Tuesday, Feb. 2.....12 noon - 5 p.m.
Wednesday, Feb. 3.....12 noon - 9 p.m.
Thursday, Feb. 4.....11 a.m. - 9 p.m.

NFL Shop @ Armiture Works
1910 N. Ola Ave., Tampa
Jan. 29 - Feb. 8
10 a.m. - 8 p.m. daily

NFL Shop @ International Plaza
2223 N. Westshore Blvd., Tampa
Jan. 27 - Feb. 10
10 a.m. - 9 p.m. daily

GAMEDAY ONLY

Raymond James Stadium
4116 North Himes Ave.
2:30 p.m. until one hour postgame

These shops are the main hub for Super Bowl-related merchandise. They will include Nike and New Era apparel and products for the two participating teams. There are additional NFL Shop presented by Visa satellite stores located throughout Tampa Bay. Download the NFL OnePass app for more information and to shop.

SUPER BOWL OPENING NIGHT PRESENTED BY BOLT 24

FEB. 1 • 8 P.M. • NFL NETWORK

Super Bowl Opening Night Presented by BOLT 24 is the national kickoff for Super Bowl LV festivities and will be held virtually. Catch the Super Bowl players and coaches in their first LIVE interviews as they prepare to head to Super Bowl LV in Tampa, including an exclusive joint interview with both teams' quarterbacks and coaches. Make sure to tune in on Feb. 1, starting at 8 p.m. (ET) on NFL Network.

1ST AND FUTURE

FEB. 2 • 8 P.M. • NFL NETWORK

The sixth annual 1st and Future competition, the annual Super Bowl event designed to spur innovation in athlete safety and performance, will air Tuesday, Feb. 2, at 8 p.m. (ET) on NFL Network. The event will feature two categories of competition: Innovations to Advance Player Health and Safety Competition, for innovative product concepts designed to try to improve player health and safety; and the NFL Computer Vision Competition, which provides access to NFL game data to crowdsource a computer vision system for detecting on-field helmet impacts during NFL plays. 1st and Future has awarded innovators and data scientists $750,000 in its first five years. For more information, visit **nfl.com/1standfuture**.

NFL HONORS

FEB. 6 • 9 P.M. • CBS

NFL Honors is the National Football League's annual awards show recognizing the NFL's best players, performances, and plays from the 2020 NFL season. The two-hour show will air nationally on CBS on Feb. 6 (9 p.m. ET), the eve of Super Bowl LV, and will include recipients of the Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year, Art Rooney Sportsmanship Award, the AP award winners, the NFL Fan of the Year, unveiling of the 2021 Pro Football Hall of Fame class, and a tribute to the "Inspire Change" initiative. Tune in to CBS and join in celebrating the greatest athletes and achievements of the season the night before the NFL's biggest game.

SUPER BOWL LV GAMEDAY FAN PLAZA

FEB. 7 • RAYMOND JAMES STADIUM

This year's pregame festivities will include all the excitement of GameDay Fan Plaza, with the addition of a vaccinated healthcare worker program, in which vaccinated healthcare heroes will be honored with a pregame concert and the opportunity to attend Super Bowl LV.

Paul Spinelli/AP Images

GameDay Fan Plaza has become a popular event for ticket holders to enjoy music, entertainment, and fan-friendly activities before entering the stadium for the Super Bowl.

David J. Phillip/AP Images

The Chiefs' Travis Kelce strikes a pose during last year's Super Bowl Opening Night. This year's event will take place virtually and be televised by NFL Network.

Gregory Payan/AP Images

In its first five years, the NFL's 1st and Future competition has awarded $750,000 for innovation in athlete safety and performance. Watch this year's show on NFL Network.

David J. Phillip/AP Images

Stephon Gilmore accepts the 2019 Associated Press Defensive Player of the Year Award at *NFL Honors*. The 2020 awards show will air on Feb. 6 at 9 p.m. (ET) on CBS.

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Ben Liebenberg/NFL

On Super Bowl Sunday, join (left to right) Rich Eisen, Steve Mariucci, Kurt Warner, and Michael Irvin on NFL Network's *NFL GameDay Morning* leading up to Super Bowl LV from Tampa Bay.

NFL NETWORK DELIVERING WALL-TO-WALL SB COVERAGE

NFL NETWORK IS YOUR ONE-STOP SHOP FOR ALL THINGS SUPER BOWL LV. For the 18th year, NFL Network is providing extensive, wall-to-wall Super Bowl coverage from Tampa, Los Angeles, and various additional locations, offering more than 70 hours of live Super Bowl Week programming starting Monday, Feb. 1, through Super Bowl Sunday on Feb. 7.

On Super Bowl Sunday, *NFL GameDay Morning* is live from Raymond James Stadium starting at 9 a.m. (ET), kicking off more than eight hours of coverage leading up to the big game, hosted by Rich Eisen, Kurt Warner, Michael Irvin, Steve Mariucci, Ian Rapoport, Cynthia Frelund, and others. Following the game, *NFL GameDay Final* provides postgame analysis and interviews with the Super Bowl LV champions.

Throughout the week, wake up with *Good Morning Football* (Monday-Friday at 7 a.m.) hosted by Kay Adams, Nate Burleson, Peter Schrager, and Kyle Brandt. *Super Bowl Live* (Monday-Friday at 1 p.m.) provides daily updates, analysis, interviews, and practice reports from NFL Network talent based in Tampa and NFL Network's studios in Los Angeles. Recap the day's action each evening with *NFL Total Access* at 7 p.m. (expands to two hours on Wednesday, Feb. 3, and Thursday, Feb. 4), hosted by MJ Acosta-Ruiz.

NFL Network is providing complete coverage of Super Bowl Opening Night Presented by BOLT 24 when the Super Bowl teams address the media for the first time. Additional prime-time specials airing on NFL Network during Super Bowl Week include *1st and Future* (Tuesday at 8 p.m.), *NFL Mic'd Up: The 2020 Season* (Wednesday at 9 p.m.), and *NFL GameDay View: Super Bowl LV* (Friday at 8 p.m.).

On the eve of Super Bowl LV, *Super Bowl Saturday Night* airs at 8 p.m. on NFL Network, leading up to *NFL Honors* at 9 p.m. on CBS. NFL Network's Saturday programming also includes *Around the NFL* (8 a.m.), *Good Morning Football: Weekend* (9 a.m.), and *Super Bowl Live* (5 p.m.).

For more programming details and information on all of NFL Network's Super Bowl LV coverage and its year-round coverage of the NFL, please visit **NFL.com/nflnetwork** and follow **@NFLMedia** on Twitter.

NFL ONE PASS

NFL ONEPASS

Download NFL OnePass for exclusive access to Super Bowl Experience Presented by Lowe's, including the ability to register for a session time, access to Ask Vince (the NFL's 24/7 concierge), and the chance to win great prizes!

For access to Super Bowl event content, register for NFL OnePass either within the app or by visiting **nfl.com/OnePass**.

By registering and checking in with NFL OnePass at Super Bowl LV events, you can participate in interactive games, photo opportunities, and will be entered for a chance to win prizes, including tickets to Super Bowl LV!

WEBSITE & SOCIAL MEDIA

- For more information on all Super Bowl LV events, visit **SuperBowl.com**
- Follow **@SuperBowl** and **@tampabayLV**, and tag your posts and photos with **#SBLV**
- Questions? Tag your posts with **#SBQuestions**

TICKETHOLDER APP

NFL TICKET HOLDER

For the most integrated and ultimate Super Bowl game experience, download the official NFL Ticketholder App. Access real-time information regarding parking, COVID-19 mitigation plans, and Know Before You Go information. On gameday, app users can engage with some of the NFL's AI and Virtual Reality integrations, as well as enjoy the luxury of mobile ordering and access to exclusive gameday apparel - all from your Apple or Android device. Be sure to visit the app store and download the NFL Ticketholder app today!

As a reminder, please keep your push notifications and app location "on" to receive up-to-date news and specialized Super Bowl messaging for a complete gameday experience.

This is 5G built right.

With massive capacity and ultra-low lag.

Verizon 5G Ultra Wideband is here and it's going to change the way you experience the game. It's the fastest 5G in the world, now in more and more places where people can use massive capacity and ultra-low lag.

We're rolling out 5G Ultra Wideband in stadiums around the country, including right here in Raymond James Stadium, so more screaming, streaming, posting fans can experience what 5G can deliver. And today, fans with select devices on 5G Ultra Wideband can get closer to the game by watching every play from up to 7 live camera angles with 5G SuperStadium.

Access 5G SuperStadium in the NFL app and the NFL Ticketholder app, or learn more at Verizon.com/5G.

verizon

5G Ultra Wideband available only in parts of select cities. Global claim from May 2020, based on Opensignal independent analysis of mobile measurements recorded during the period January 31 – April 30, 2020 © 2021 Opensignal Limited. 5G SuperStadium available during Super Bowl LV for iPhone 12 and select Samsung devices.

CBS TO BROADCAST THIRD SUPER BOWL FROM TAMPA

Left to right: Tony Romo, Jim Nantz, and Tracy Wolfson

FOR THE 21st TIME IN ITS HISTORY, the CBS Television Network is broadcasting the Super Bowl – the most of any network. CBS Sports' Jim Nantz and Tony Romo will call the action, marking the second time this duo calls the Super Bowl together. It marks the sixth Super Bowl call overall for Nantz, who also hosted the network's Super Bowl pregame show, *THE SUPER BOWL TODAY*, in 2001 and 2004. Tracy Wolfson and Evan Washburn serve as reporters, Gene Steratore serves as NFL Rules Analyst, and Jay Feely as a Contributor.

CBS was in Tampa for Super Bowl XVIII when the broadcast team of Pat Summerall and John Madden called the Los Angeles Raiders' 38-9 victory over Washington. CBS returned to Tampa for Super Bowl XXXV when the Baltimore Ravens shut down the New York Giants, 34-7. Greg Gumbel called the action for CBS Sports, marking the first time an African-American called a Super Bowl for a major network. Phil Simms joined Gumbel in the booth as the game analyst.

With its great history of Super Bowl coverage, CBS is primed to carry on the tradition.

"Our long and storied tradition is never more evident than with our history of Super Bowl broadcasts – beginning with Super Bowl I in 1967 to Super Bowl LV today," said Sean McManus, Chairman, CBS Sports. "Our tradition and commitment to excellence with quality production, commentary, and technological innovation have continued to define our network, especially in the past 20 years as we return to Tampa for the third time to broadcast the Super Bowl."

THE SUPER BOWL TODAY (2 p.m. ET) highlights CBS' pregame coverage with James Brown, who is hosting his record 10th Super Bowl, Boomer Esiason, Bill Cowher, Phil Simms, and Nate Burleson, as well as Ian Eagle, Charles Davis, Insider Jason La Canfora, and Jim Rome. *THAT OTHER PREGAME SHOW (TOPS)* begins the day's coverage at 11:30 a.m. with host Adam Schein, Amy Trask, London Fletcher, Jonathan Jones, and Kyle Long.

CBS Sports will stream Super Bowl LV across more digital platforms than ever before, delivering unprecedented access to its game coverage. Streaming will be available unauthenticated at CBSSports.com and on the CBS Sports app for OTT devices, smart TVs, and mobile devices. CBS Sports' broadcast coverage of Super Bowl LV will also be available to stream live via the CBS All Access subscription service.

For a full listing of CBS' coverage of Super Bowl LV, including the more than 75 hours of Super Bowl programming on the CBS Sports Network throughout the week, visit **CBSSports.com**.

McManus also serves as Executive Producer of CBS' coverage of the NFL and Super Bowl LV. David Berson is President, CBS Sports. Harold Bryant is Executive Producer and Executive Vice President, Production, CBS Sports. Jim Rikhoff is lead game producer, and Mike Arnold is lead game director of Super Bowl LV. Drew Kaliski is producer and Bob Matina is director of *THE SUPER BOWL TODAY*, and Deb Gelman is producer and Linda Malino is director of *THAT OTHER PREGAME SHOW*.

SUPER BOWL LV ON THE RADIO

For the 34th consecutive year and 48th time overall, Westwood One will serve as the exclusive network radio home of the Super Bowl. Beginning at 5 p.m. (ET), Kevin Harlan and Super Bowl XXXIV MVP and Hall of Fame quarterback Kurt Warner will describe all the action to millions of listeners tuned in across 700 radio stations nationwide, in 175 countries, and nearly 250 ships at sea via the American Forces Radio Network. Fans also can hear the broadcast on SiriusXM and on NFL Game Pass.

This is Harlan's 11th consecutive Super Bowl broadcast for the network and Warner's third. Former All-Pro offensive lineman Tony Boselli and Laura Okmin will serve as reporters from Raymond James Stadium. For the 20th straight year, Emmy Award-winning sportscaster Jim Gray hosts the pregame and halftime shows and will be joined by six-time Super Bowl champion Tom Brady and Arizona Cardinals wide receiver Larry Fitzgerald.

Scott Graham kicks off Westwood One's live coverage with *Super Sunday* at 4 p.m., featuring contributions from Hall of Famers Terrell Davis and Rod Woodson. The network's pregame coverage

Kevin Harlan (left) and Kurt Warner

launches at 2 p.m. with *Super Bowl Preview* and *Super Bowl Insider*.

Westwood One is the nation's leader in play-by-play radio sports. It has been the exclusive network radio partner to the NFL since 1987 and to the NCAA since 2003, including coverage of March Madness and the Final Four.

Howard Deneroff is the Executive Producer of Westwood One Sports. Mike Eaby is the coordinating producer. Aaron Cummins and Brian Finkelstein will produce the pregame and halftime coverage of Super Bowl LV.

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PREGAME PERFORMANCES

GRAMMY-NOMINATED ARTISTS Eric Church and Jazmine Sullivan are set to pair up for the first time to sing the National Anthem as part of Super Bowl LV pregame festivities, and GRAMMY-award winning artist H.E.R. will join the pregame lineup with her rendition of "America the Beautiful."

A seven-time ACM Award winner, four-time CMA Award winner, and 10-time GRAMMY nominee, Church's most recent album, *Desperate Man*, earned a GRAMMY nomination for Best Country Album (his third nod in the category) and produced his most recent No. 1 hit, "Some Of It."

Often cited as one of today's most dynamic vocalists, Sullivan's 2015 studio album, *Reality Show*, debuted at No. 1 on Billboard's R&B Albums chart and No. 2 on the R&B/Hip-Hop Albums chart. She kicked off 2021 with *Heaux Tales*, which debuted at No. 4 on the Billboard 200 chart.

In 2019, singer/songwriter/multi-instrumentalist H.E.R. won GRAMMY Awards for Best R&B Album (*H.E.R.*) and Best R&B Performance ("Best Part" featuring Daniel Caesar) and a NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Female Artist.

In addition, on behalf of the National Association of the Deaf (NAD), Warren "Wawa" Snipe, acclaimed Deaf rapper and recording artist, will perform the National Anthem and "America the Beautiful" in American Sign Language.

WALTER PAYTON NFL MAN OF THE YEAR PRESENTED BY NATIONWIDE

Considered the league's most prestigious honor, the Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year Award presented by Nationwide recognizes NFL players who have not only exhibited excellence on the field, but whose passion to impact lives extends beyond the game and has led them to leave a positive legacy in their communities.

The award was established in 1970. It was renamed in 1999 after the late Hall of Fame Chicago Bears running back Walter Payton.

Representing the best of the NFL's commitment to philanthropy and community impact, 32 players are selected as their team's Man of the Year and become eligible to win the national award.

The 2020 Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year will be announced during *NFL Honors*, a prime time awards special to air on CBS on the eve of Super Bowl LV, and the winner will be introduced again at Raymond James Stadium prior to the start of the game.

All 32 nominees receive a $40,000 donation to their charity of choice, and $250,000 is donated to the winner's charity of choice. See the full list of the 2020 nominees on page 129.

NFL PLAY 60 SUPER KID

Auburndale, Fla., native **AMAYA BRANNON**, 10, is this year's NFL PLAY 60 Super Kid. As the winner of the 2020 NFL PLAY 60 Super Bowl Contest presented by Danimals, Amaya was the official NFL PLAY 60 Ambassador during Super Bowl Week and will be recognized at the start of the second half of Super Bowl LV at Raymond James Stadium.

STADIUM SAFETY

The health and safety of our fans, players, coaches, and staff is – and has always been – priority number one. For Super Bowl LV, the NFL created comprehensive safety protocols that all fans and staff at Raymond James Stadium will be expected to follow, including the wearing of face coverings, maintaining physical distance from others, and hand washing. As NFL fans, we're all in this together when it comes to taking on the common opponent – COVID-19. For more information on Super Bowl LV health and safety protocols, visit **nfl.com/super-bowl/event-info/fan-gameday-playbook**.

CASHLESS PAYMENTS

In order to create a safer and more efficient gameday experience for our fans, Super Bowl LV will be the first fully cashless Super Bowl, offering digital payment acceptance for fans throughout the stadium, including parking, concessions, and retail. For fans requiring assistance, reverse ATMs are located in the concourses of all three levels of the stadium, dispensing pre-paid cards to offer a cashless solution for more fans. Be sure to download the NFL Ticketholder app and visit the "Stadium Maps" section to find a reverse ATM near you.

FOOTBALL FLYOVER

The flyover for Super Bowl LV is supported by Air Force Global Strike Command, headquartered at Barksdale Air Force Base, Louisiana. The command is responsible for the Air Force's entire bomber force, to include the B-1, B-52, and B-2 in the flyover formation.

FANS IN THE STANDS

This has been a year unlike any other, and our fan base and communities have rallied together throughout, proving that truly "It Takes All of Us" to persevere. While Super Bowl LV will look a little different, we have the unique opportunity to come together and celebrate the uniting force of football, both on and off the field, by honoring our local heroes and celebrating our biggest fans in the most unique way possible – being "Fans in the Stands" and inviting them to upload their photo to be printed as a fan cutout. These cutouts will help us fill Raymond James Stadium in a safe way while maintaining physical distancing and other health and safety protocols.

For adults with type 2 diabetes (T2D), along with diet and exercise, once-daily RYBELSUS® can help lower blood sugar

Wake Up to the Possibilities of Reaching Your A1C Goal

RYBELSUS® is proven to lower blood sugar and A1C

In a 6-month study of people with an average starting A1C of 8%, the majority of **people taking RYBELSUS® reached an A1C of less than 7%**[a]:

- Nearly 7 out of 10 people on 7 mg of RYBELSUS®
- Nearly 8 out of 10 people on 14 mg of RYBELSUS®
- About 3 out of 10 people on a sugar pill

RYBELSUS® may help you lose some weight

While not for weight loss, in the same 6-month study, people with an average starting weight of 195 pounds **lost up to 8 pounds**[a]:

- 5 pounds on 7 mg of RYBELSUS®
- 8 pounds on 14 mg of RYBELSUS®
- 3 pounds on a sugar pill

While many people in medical studies lost weight, some did gain weight.

RYBELSUS® does not increase the risk of major cardiovascular (CV) events such as heart attack, stroke, or death[b]

[a]In a 6-month study looking at A1C with 703 adults with T2D comparing 7 mg RYBELSUS® and 14 mg RYBELSUS® with a sugar pill when both were added to diet and exercise.
[b]In a cardiovascular safety study, 3183 adults with T2D and a high risk of CV events were treated with either 14 mg RYBELSUS® or a sugar pill in addition to their usual diabetes and CV medications.

If eligible, **you may pay as little as $10 for a 30-day prescription**[c]

Text[d] **RESULTS to 44535** to learn more about RYBELSUS®

What is Rybelsus®?

Rybelsus® (semaglutide) tablets 7 mg or 14 mg is a prescription medicine for adults with type 2 diabetes that along with diet and exercise may improve blood sugar (glucose).

- Rybelsus® is not recommended as the first choice of medicine for treating diabetes
- It is not known if Rybelsus® can be used in people who have had pancreatitis
- Rybelsus® is not for use in people with type 1 diabetes and people with diabetic ketoacidosis
- It is not known if Rybelsus® is safe and effective for use in children under 18 years of age

Important Safety Information

What is the most important information I should know about Rybelsus®?

Rybelsus® may cause serious side effects, including:

- **Possible thyroid tumors, including cancer.** Tell your healthcare provider if you get a lump or swelling in your neck, hoarseness, trouble swallowing, or shortness of breath. These may be symptoms of thyroid cancer. In studies with rodents, Rybelsus® and medicines that work like Rybelsus® caused thyroid tumors, including thyroid cancer. It is not known if Rybelsus® will cause thyroid tumors or a type of thyroid cancer called medullary thyroid carcinoma (MTC) in people

Do not use Rybelsus® if:

- you or any of your family have ever had MTC, or if you have an endocrine system condition called Multiple Endocrine Neoplasia syndrome type 2 (MEN 2)
- you are allergic to semaglutide or any of the ingredients in Rybelsus®

Before using Rybelsus®, tell your healthcare provider if you have any other medical conditions, including if you:

- have or have had problems with your pancreas or kidneys
- have a history of vision problems related to your diabetes
- are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if Rybelsus® will harm your unborn baby. You should stop using Rybelsus® 2 months before you plan to become pregnant. Talk to your healthcare provider about the best way to control your blood sugar if you plan to become pregnant or while you are pregnant
- are breastfeeding or plan to breastfeed. Breastfeeding is not recommended during treatment with Rybelsus®

Tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. Rybelsus® may affect the way some medicines work and some medicines may affect the way Rybelsus® works.

What are the possible side effects of Rybelsus®?

Rybelsus® may cause serious side effects, including:

- **inflammation of your pancreas (pancreatitis).** Stop using Rybelsus® and call your healthcare provider right away if you have severe pain in your stomach area (abdomen) that will not go away, with or without vomiting. You may feel the pain from your abdomen to your back
- **changes in vision.** Tell your healthcare provider if you have changes in vision during treatment with Rybelsus®
- **low blood sugar (hypoglycemia).** Your risk for getting low blood sugar may be higher if you use Rybelsus® with another medicine that can cause low blood sugar, such as a sulfonylurea or insulin. **Signs and symptoms of low blood sugar may include:** dizziness or lightheadedness, blurred vision, anxiety, irritability or mood changes, sweating, slurred speech, hunger, confusion or drowsiness, shakiness, weakness, headache, fast heartbeat, and feeling jittery
- **kidney problems (kidney failure).** In people who have kidney problems, diarrhea, nausea, and vomiting may cause a loss of fluids (dehydration), which may cause kidney problems to get worse. It is important for you to drink fluids to help reduce your chance of dehydration
- **serious allergic reactions.** Stop using Rybelsus® and get medical help right away, if you have any symptoms of a serious allergic reaction including itching, rash, or difficulty breathing

The most common side effects of Rybelsus® may include nausea, stomach (abdominal) pain, diarrhea, decreased appetite, vomiting, and constipation. Nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea are most common when you first start Rybelsus®.

Please see Brief Summary of Prescribing Information on adjacent page.

[c]Commercially insured patients only. Offer valid for up to six 30-day fills. Eligibility and other restrictions apply.
[d]Message and data rates may apply. Check with your mobile service provider. Message frequency will be based on your selections. Text **HELP** to **44535** for help. Text **STOP** to **44535** to quit. See Terms and Conditions of Use at RYBELSUS.com.

See cost and savings info at RYBELSUS.com, and ask your healthcare provider about RYBELSUS® today.

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RYBELSUS®
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Brief Summary of information about RYBELSUS® (semaglutide) tablets

RYBELSUS®

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Rx Only

This information is not comprehensive.

- Talk to your healthcare provider or pharmacist
- Visit www.novo-pi.com/rybelsus.pdf to obtain the FDA-approved product labeling
- Call 1-833-GLP-PILL

Read this Medication Guide before you start using RYBELSUS® and each time you get a refill. There may be new information. This information does not take the place of talking to your healthcare provider about your medical condition or your treatment.

What is the most important information I should know about RYBELSUS®?

RYBELSUS® may cause serious side effects, including:

- **Possible thyroid tumors, including cancer.** Tell your healthcare provider if you get a lump or swelling in your neck, hoarseness, trouble swallowing, or shortness of breath. These may be symptoms of thyroid cancer. In studies with rodents, RYBELSUS® and medicines that work like RYBELSUS® caused thyroid tumors, including thyroid cancer. It is not known if RYBELSUS® will cause thyroid tumors or a type of thyroid cancer called medullary thyroid carcinoma (MTC) in people.
- Do not use RYBELSUS® if you or any of your family have ever had a type of thyroid cancer called medullary thyroid carcinoma (MTC), or if you have an endocrine system condition called Multiple Endocrine Neoplasia syndrome type 2 (MEN 2).

What is RYBELSUS®?

RYBELSUS® is a prescription medicine used along with diet and exercise to improve blood sugar (glucose) in adults with type 2 diabetes.

- RYBELSUS® is not recommended as the first choice of medicine for treating diabetes.
- It is not known if RYBELSUS® can be used in people who have had pancreatitis.
- RYBELSUS® is not for use in patients with type 1 diabetes and people with diabetic ketoacidosis.

It is not known if RYBELSUS® is safe and effective for use in children under 18 years of age.

Do not use RYBELSUS® if:

- you or any of your family have ever had a type of thyroid cancer called medullary thyroid carcinoma (MTC) or if you have an endocrine system condition called Multiple Endocrine Neoplasia syndrome type 2 (MEN 2).
- you are allergic to semaglutide or any of the ingredients in RYBELSUS®.

Before using RYBELSUS®, tell your healthcare provider if you have any other medical conditions, including if you:

- have or have had problems with your pancreas or kidneys.
- have a history of vision problems related to your diabetes.
- are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if RYBELSUS® will harm your unborn baby. You should stop using RYBELSUS® 2 months before you plan to become pregnant. Talk to your healthcare provider about the best way to control your blood sugar if you plan to become pregnant or while you are pregnant.
- are breastfeeding or plan to breastfeed. Breastfeeding is not recommended during treatment with RYBELSUS®.

Tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. RYBELSUS® may affect the way some medicines work and some medicines may affect the way RYBELSUS® works.

Before using RYBELSUS®, talk to your healthcare provider about low blood sugar and how to manage it. Tell your healthcare provider if you are taking other medicines to treat diabetes, including insulin or sulfonylureas.

Know the medicines you take. Keep a list of them to show your healthcare provider and pharmacist when you get a new medicine.

How should I take RYBELSUS®?

- Take RYBELSUS® exactly as your healthcare provider tells you to.
- Take RYBELSUS® by mouth on an empty stomach when you first wake up.
- Take RYBELSUS® with a sip of water (no more than 4 ounces).
- Do not split, crush or chew. Swallow RYBELSUS® whole.
- After 30 minutes, you can eat, drink, or take other oral medications. RYBELSUS® works best if you eat 30 to 60 minutes after taking RYBELSUS®.
- If you miss a dose of RYBELSUS®, skip the missed dose and go back to your regular schedule.
- Talk to your healthcare provider about how to prevent, recognize and manage low blood sugar (hypoglycemia), high blood sugar (hyperglycemia), and problems you have because of your diabetes.

What are the possible side effects of RYBELSUS®?

RYBELSUS® may cause serious side effects, including:

- **See "What is the most important information I should know about RYBELSUS®?"**
- **inflammation of your pancreas (pancreatitis).** Stop using RYBELSUS® and call your healthcare provider right away if you have severe pain in your stomach area (abdomen) that will not go away, with or without vomiting. You may feel the pain from your abdomen to your back.
- **changes in vision.** Tell your healthcare provider if you have changes in vision during treatment with RYBELSUS®.
- **low blood sugar (hypoglycemia).** Your risk for getting low blood sugar may be higher if you use RYBELSUS® with another medicine that can cause low blood sugar, such as a sulfonylurea or insulin. **Signs and symptoms of low blood sugar may include:**
  - dizziness or light-headedness
  - anxiety, irritability, or mood changes
  - slurred speech
  - shakiness
  - fast heartbeat
  - hunger
  - weakness
  - feeling jittery
  - blurred vision
  - sweating
  - confusion or drowsiness
  - headache
- **kidney problems (kidney failure).** In people who have kidney problems, diarrhea, nausea, and vomiting may cause a loss of fluids (dehydration) which may cause kidney problems to get worse. It is important for you to drink fluids to help reduce your chance of dehydration.
- **serious allergic reactions.** Stop using RYBELSUS® and get medical help right away, if you have any symptoms of a serious allergic reaction including itching, rash, or difficulty breathing.

The most common side effects of RYBELSUS® may include nausea, stomach (abdominal) pain, diarrhea, decreased appetite, vomiting and constipation. Nausea, vomiting and diarrhea are most common when you first start RYBELSUS®.

Talk to your healthcare provider about any side effect that bothers you or does not go away. These are not all the possible side effects of RYBELSUS®.

Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

How should I store RYBELSUS®?

- Store RYBELSUS® at room temperature between 68°F and 77°F (20°C to 25°C).
- Store in a dry place away from moisture.
- Store tablet in the original pack.
- Keep the tablet in the pack until you are ready to take it.
- **Keep RYBELSUS® and all medicines out of the reach of children.**

Revised: 01/2020

Manufactured by: Novo Nordisk A/S, DK-2880 Bagsvaerd, Denmark
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THE WEEKND SET TO TRANSFORM THE WORLD'S BIGGEST STAGE

PEPSI, THE NFL, AND ROC NATION COLLABORATED to bring on one of today's most compelling and significant artists, **The Weeknd**, to the *Pepsi Super Bowl LV Halftime Show*.

In less than a decade, The Weeknd has amassed a global fanbase, become a multi-award winning artist, and recently was named one of the most influential people of 2020 by *Time* magazine. Regarded for his creative vision, The Weeknd is known for his genre-bending music and redefining storytelling, both sonically and visually.

Marking the second year of this collaboration, Pepsi, the NFL, and Roc Nation are excited to bring The Weeknd to the world's biggest stage for what is sure to be a transcendent performance.

The *Pepsi Super Bowl LV Halftime Show* telecast will be produced by DPS with Roc Nation and Jesse Collins serving as executive producers, and Hamish Hamilton serving as director. Roc Nation is also serving as the strategic entertainment advisors of the live performance.

"We all grow up watching the world's biggest acts playing the Super Bowl, and one can only dream of being in that position. I'm humbled, honored, and ecstatic to be the center of that infamous stage this year," said The Weeknd.

Filtering R&B and pop through an ambitious widescreen lens, The Weeknd took over popular music and culture on his own terms. The multi-platinum, three-time GRAMMY Award winner is one of the most listened-to artists in the world on Spotify (over 51 billion streams) and is a top 10 artist of all time for RIAA singles. His 2020 album *After Hours* is the No. 1 most-streamed R&B album of all time (followed by his 2016 album *Starboy* at No. 2), and his '80s nostalgic track "Blinding Lights" went 5X RIAA-certified platinum and broke the record for Billboard's longest-running No. 1 on its US radio chart at 46 weeks and counting.

Alongside his gilded musical career, he's graced the covers of *TIME*, *Forbes*, *Variety*, *Rolling Stone*, *Esquire*, *Harper's Bazaar*, and *GQ* along with the late night stages with heralded performances on *SNL*, *Jimmy Kimmel Live!*, *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert*, and the VMA's, where he accepted the awards for Video of the Year and Best R&B video. In recent times, he has made acting appearances in TV and film with 2019's film *Uncut Gems* as well as starring in and co-writing an episode of the hit show *American Dad*.

He generously shares, with more than $2 million in donations made in 2020 to various charities. The continuous record-breaking of charts, sales, and streams, headlining the biggest festivals and stadiums in the world, and his ever mysterious public persona combined solidifies The Weeknd as one of the most compelling and significant artists of the 21st century.

The *Pepsi Super Bowl Halftime Show* is the most-watched musical performance of the year, with more than 104 million viewers tuning in to last year's show headlined by Shakira and Jennifer Lopez.

Super Bowl LV marks Pepsi's 10th year as title sponsor of the *Super Bowl Halftime Show* and 19th year as an NFL partner. Past halftime performances include Beyoncé, Justin Timberlake, Lady Gaga, Katy Perry, Bruno Mars, Prince, and Madonna.

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1. Based on HP internal testing using CrystalDiskMark benchmarking software. Performance is sequentially faster (read only) compared to traditional 5,400 rpm HDD.

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BRADY, BUCS HOMING IN ON A TITLE

BY CRAIG ELLENPORT

WHEN THE BUCCANEERS take the field in Super Bowl LV, it will mark the first time a team has played the Super Bowl in its home stadium. However, their quarterback, Tom Brady, is *always* at home in the Super Bowl.

In Brady's first season with Tampa Bay, the Bucs made the postseason for the first time in 13 years and reached the Super Bowl for the first time in 18 years. That's no coincidence.

Brady will be starting in his 10th Super Bowl. Tenth! He's won it six times, earning MVP honors in four of those games. Even before this season, there was no doubt Brady is the G.O.A.T. Another NFL title would just add to the legend.

When he came to Tampa Bay, observers wondered how much the 43-year-old Brady had left in the tank. Turns out it's plenty. After a few bumpy moments, attributable to both a new system and a truncated offseason, he ended up passing for 4,633 yards and a franchise-record 40 touchdowns, the second-best TD total of his career.

"Any time you switch teams, it's a bit more of a challenge mentally," Brady says. "I definitely study my playbook a lot more, but at the same time, football is football. It's still, 'Get open, catch the ball, run to the open spots.'"

Tampa Bay opened with a 6-2 mark, mainly on the heels of a stout defense. The team lost three of its next four, but ended the regular season with four straight wins. And the offense got hot at the right time, averaging 37 ppg over that span.

"We can do any damn thing we want to do [on offense]," head coach Bruce Arians said following the Buccaneers' impressive Week 14 win over the Vikings.

Arians, a two-time Coach of the Year, took over the Bucs in 2019 and immediately put his stamp on this team. His "no risk it, no biscuit" mantra is somewhat in contrast to Brady's no-nonsense approach, but they've made it work.

"I feel like we have a great relationship," Brady says. "From the moment I got here, we've just had great dialogue, and I certainly appreciate all the insight he gives me and the way he coaches and leads."

Kevin Sabitus/AP Images

For Tom Brady, the 2020 season marked a new beginning but will have a familiar ending. The Bucs quarterback is playing in the 10th Super Bowl of his storied career.

Tom DiPace/AP Images

Brad Penner/AP Images

Few teams possess the depth the Buccaneers enjoy at the wide receiver and tight end positions. Mike Evans (left) eclipsed 1,000 receiving yards and caught 13 touchdown passes, while Rob Gronkowski (right) returned after a year away from the game and finished strong, ending the regular season with 45 receptions, seven that went for TDs.

2020 RESULTS

TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS (14-5)

9/13	New Orleans	23-34	L
9/20	CAROLINA	31-17	W
9/27	Denver	28-10	W
10/4	L.A. CHARGERS	38-31	W
10/8	Chicago	19-20	L
10/18	GREEN BAY	38-10	W
10/25	Las Vegas	45-20	W
11/ 2	N.Y. Giants	25-23	W
11/8	NEW ORLEANS	3-38	L
11/15	Carolina	46-23	W
11/23	L.A. RAMS	24-27	L
11/29	KANSAS CITY	24-27	L
12/13	MINNESOTA	26-14	W
12/20	Atlanta	31-27	W
12/26	Detroit	47-7	W
1/3	ATLANTA	44-27	W
NFC Playoffs			
1/9	Washington	31-23	W
1/17	New Orleans	30-20	W
1/24	Green Bay	31-26	W

Before 2020, it had been 18 years since Tampa Bay's last postseason victory. After three playoff wins with Brady under center – including victories over future Hall of Famers Drew Brees and Aaron Rodgers along the way – the Buccaneers are now one win away from hoisting the Lombardi Trophy for a second time.

OFFENSE

With no preseason in 2020, it took a while for Brady to get comfortable with his new offense. But it was just a matter of time, because Brady has never had this many weapons at his disposal. By season's end, the Bucs were simply dangerous.

"I think you've seen that," Saints head coach Sean Payton said before the Divisional playoffs. "This last half of the season or last third of the season, I think they're playing at a very high level."

Brady has a pair of premier receivers in Mike Evans and Chris Godwin. Evans led the way with 70 catches for 1,006 yards and 13 TDs, while Godwin, an excellent route runner with great hands, added 65 catches for 840 yards and seven scores.

The Buccaneers already had a valuable third option in Scotty Miller, who averaged 15.2 yards per reception, but they added even more to this group in October when they signed Antonio Brown. The former Pro Bowl selection came on strong down the stretch, with 45 receptions for 483 yards and four TDs.

And if that wasn't enough, Brady's all-time favorite target, tight end Rob Gronkowski, came out of his one-year retirement to join his quarterback. He had 12 receptions and no TDs in his first five games, but ended up with 45 grabs for 623 yards and seven scores.

"They're putting up close to 400 yards of passing almost every week," says Saints safety Malcolm Jenkins. "Gronk has gotten more involved, AB has gotten more involved. Mike Evans has been steady, and Godwin is just somebody who I think can always win and get them a good conversion and make plays. And Tom's been clean; you keep him upright, you keep him in the pocket, he's the greatest to ever do it."

Another factor is a reliable running game that makes play-action passing all the more successful. The Buccaneers have a thunder-and-lightning tandem in Leonard Fournette and Ronald Jones II. The latter, in his third season out of USC, led the team with 978 rushing yards and seven TDs. Fournette added 367 yards and six scores. The duo also combined for 64 receptions.

There might not have been a unit in the NFL with more pressure on it than the Tampa

BRING HOME GAME DAY GRILLING

Available at Publix

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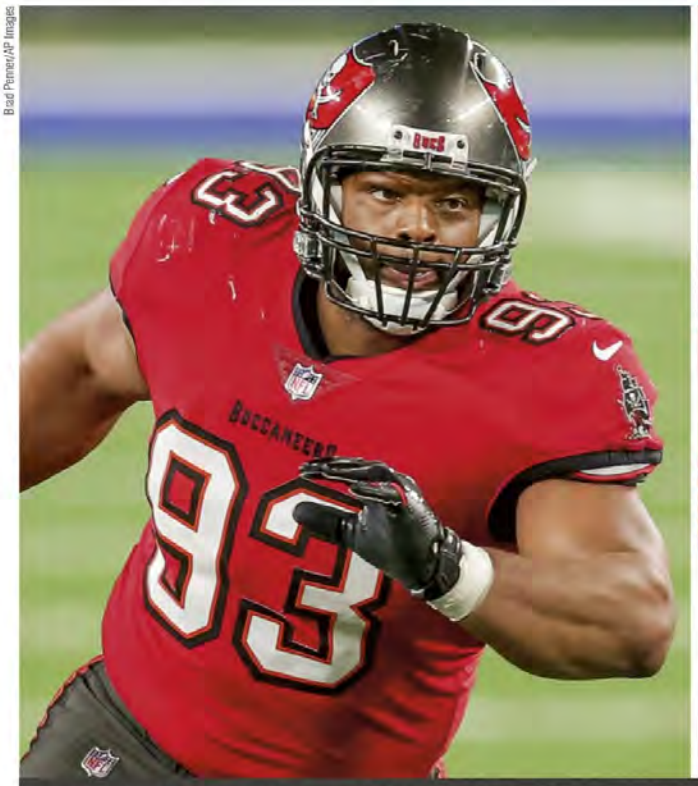

Justin Edmonds/AP Images

Rising to the challenge, the Buccaneers' defense keyed the team's strong start while the offense found its rhythm. Ndamukong Suh (left) brings the strength and size to clog up the interior and had six of the team's 48 sacks. Devin White (right), meanwhile, had nine sacks, and his 140 stops on the year ranked fifth in the league.

Bay offensive line. Tasked with keeping Brady safe, they've done just that. The Bucs allowed 22 sacks, fourth-fewest in the league. Anchored by veteran center Ryan Jensen, the line has been bolstered this year by first-round pick Tristan Wirfs at right tackle. Left guard Ali Marpet has been a force on the inside.

Brady's famous work ethic has rubbed off on his offense, and it showed as the season went on. Having reached the Super Bowl, it's clear the unit has developed the chemistry needed to be productive.

"There's so many things that go into building chemistry," Godwin says. "Figuring out how to design plays for the right guys and figuring out how we mesh well together. And it didn't click at first.... We have the guys that we need, but you can't expedite the process of creating chemistry."

DEFENSE

While the offense is loaded with star power, the defense is more of a blue-collar group. But they get the job done.

It starts with the front seven. The Bucs led the NFL in rushing defense, allowing just 80.6 yards per game. Opposing rushers had just 11 runs of 15 or more yards all season – only the

THE BUCS STARTED HERE

FOR THE FIRST TIME in the history of the Super Bowl, a team is playing for the championship in its home stadium. It's fitting that the Buccaneers – in this most unusual of NFL seasons – are the ones accomplishing that feat.

The Bucs joined the NFL in 1976, coached by John McKay, who had won four national championships in 16 seasons at USC. They immediately embarked on a 26-game losing streak, which remains a league record.

Outwardly, McKay took the struggles in stride, becoming famous for his wit. When asked after a game about his team's execution, he quipped, "I think it's a good idea," and another time analyzing, "We didn't tackle well today, but we made up for it by not blocking."

Yet there was something brewing with those Bucs, who used successive first-round picks to draft future Hall of Fame defensive end Lee Roy Selmon, running back Ricky Bell, and QB Doug Williams. In 1979, they shocked the football world by going 10-6, winning the NFC Central Division, and reaching the conference title game.

"That year, we stopped doubting ourselves, and we started believing the fact that we were good," Dewey Selmon, Lee Roy's brother and a linebacker on that Bucs team, told *The Athletic*. "It's amazing to me even today how the mind and spirit of a team reversed itself in one season."

Twenty-three seasons later, the Bucs broke through the final barrier; they beat the Raiders in Super Bowl XXXVII in San Diego. This time, they want to do their celebrating a lot closer to home.

Peter Read Miller/AP Images

Lee Roy Selmon was part of the Bucs' early evolution into a title contender.

TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS ALL-TIME PLAYOFF RESULTS

(9 wins, 9 losses)

Year	Playoffs	Opponent	Final	W/L
1979	NFC Divisional	Philadelphia	24-17	W
	NFC Championship	Los Angeles Rams	0-9	L
1981	NFC Divisional	at Dallas	0-38	L
1982	NFC First Round Playoff	at Dallas	17-30	L
1997	NFC Wild Card	Detroit	20-10	W
	NFC Divisional	at Green Bay	7-21	L
1999	NFC Divisional	Washington	14-13	W
	NFC Championship	at St. Louis Rams	6-11	L
2000	NFC Wild Card	at Philadelphia	3-21	L
2001	NFC Wild Card	at Philadelphia	9-31	L
2002	NFC Divisional	San Francisco	31-6	W
	NFC Championship	at Philadelphia	27-10	W
	Super Bowl XXXVII	**Oakland Raiders**	**48-21**	**W**
2005	NFC Wild Card	Washington	10-17	L
2007	NFC Wild Card	New York Giants	14-24	L
2020	NFC Wild Card	at Washington	31-23	W
	NFC Divisional	at New Orleans	30-20	W
	NFC Championship	at Green Bay	31-26	W

Jeff Haynes/AP Images

The Buccaneers' wealth of defensive talent extends to inside linebacker Lavonte David. The nine-year veteran finished second on the team with 117 tackles and added six pass breakups and three forced fumbles.

Rams allowed fewer. Overall, Tampa Bay ranked eighth in both yards allowed per game (327.1) and points per game (22.2).

When Arians took over in 2019, he brought in Todd Bowles to be his defensive coordinator. Bowles, who also was with Arians in Arizona, has done an excellent job with a mix of veterans and younger players. Those players have great trust in Bowles, who in turn has no qualms giving his young players a lot of responsibility.

"I think it goes both ways for sure," Arians says. "You never want to put so much stuff in that they're [overthinking]. Todd does a great job of having just enough that's different and still the base stuff is there. Guys have good recall, and I think it's just been a good collaboration between trusting each other."

Bowles likes to be creative with his front seven, moving linemen and outside linebackers frequently, especially in passing situations, so that the opposition has a tough time figuring out where the pressure will come from. He's also not afraid to blitz often. Bowles' defense is proactive and always aggressive.

"We're more worried about what we do and think we can do to win as opposed to worrying about the opposition," Bowles says. "We know every week we're going to face a good opponent …so it's a big challenge for us."

One of the biggest challenges for Tampa Bay's opponents is figuring out how to slow down inside linebacker Devin White, who had a breakout season. White led the team with 140 tackles. His sideline-to-sideline speed is a big factor in Tampa Bay's run defense, and he also has shown great ability to rush the passer – adding nine sacks. In Tampa Bay's Divisional playoff win in New Orleans, White's knack to always be around the football resulted in a fumble recovery and an interception.

White and fellow inside linebacker Lavonte David (117 tackles) have been big against the run, often benefitting from veteran defensive lineman Ndamukong Suh clogging the middle of the line.

Jason Pierre-Paul is the defense's lone Pro Bowl selection. Playing outside linebacker in Tampa Bay's 3-4 scheme, he had a team-leading 9.5 sacks. Pierre-Paul, who was on the Giants when they won Super Bowl XLVI, now has 88.5 career sacks.

On the other side, Shaquil Barrett recorded eight sacks in 2020 – he's racked up 27.5 in his two seasons with the Bucs.

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The Buccaneers' secondary is young and athletically gifted. Cornerbacks Carlton Davis III, Jamel Dean, and Sean Murphy-Bunting, and safeties Antoine Winfield Jr. and Jordan Whitehead have all been in the NFL for three years or less. Davis led the team with four interceptions. Winfield, a 2020 second-round pick, had one interception and three sacks.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Ryan Succop, in his 12th season overall and first with Tampa Bay, was a perfect 20-for-20 on field-goal attempts inside the 40 this season. Punter Bradley Pinion averaged 45.2 yards per punt with a net of 40.2.

Jaydon Mickens handles the bulk of the return game; he averaged 6.2 yards on punt returns and 24.3 yards on kickoffs.

GAME PLAN

When the Buccaneers made the Super Bowl 18 years ago, they featured a lunch-pail offense and a star-studded defense (with Warren Sapp, Derrick Brooks, Ronde Barber, and John Lynch). This year's squad has flipped that script.

But while Brady receives much of the attention, Tampa Bay's offense is at its best when it is balanced. In the playoff win over the Saints, the Buccaneers ran the ball more than they passed it (35-33). Look for Arians to establish the run game early, both to control the clock and to set up play-action passes.

When the ball goes in the air, Brady has a special mix of options – from Evans, Godwin, and Miller, to Gronkowski, Brown, and veteran tight end Cameron Brate, who has reliable hands and excels at gaining yards after the catch.

As for the defense, after knocking off Brees and Rodgers in the playoffs, it will be playing with extreme confidence. No one is expecting this unit to match the prowess of the 2002 Buccaneers defense that returned three of its five interceptions in Super Bowl XXXVII for touchdowns, but this group is certainly capable of winning the turnover battle.

Tampa Bay has the home-field advantage in Super Bowl LV. More importantly, it has Tom Brady – and that seems like an unfair advantage.

Craig Ellenport has covered the NFL for 25 years. He is editor-in-chief of The33rdTeam.com and author of NFL 100: The Greatest Moments of the NFL's Century.

NFC CHAMPIONSHIP GAME

Tampa Bay 31
GREEN BAY 26

AFTER WINNING THEIR THIRD CONSECUTIVE road playoff game, the Tampa Bay Buccaneers could make reservations to come home for the Super Bowl.

The Bucs never trailed, taking the opening possession 66 yards and scoring when Tom Brady (20 of 36, 280 yards, 3 TDs, 3 Int.) found Mike Evans open in the left side of the end zone for a 15-yard touchdown.

Turnovers and a touch of aggressiveness ended up being the game's big story. Shortly after Buccaneers cornerback Sean Murphy-Bunting intercepted an Aaron Rodgers pass late in the second quarter, Brady and company faced a 4th-and-4 at the Packers 45 with 13 seconds to go. But instead of punting and taking a 14-10 lead into the locker room, Tampa Bay coach Bruce Arians kept his offense on the field. Brady completed a swing pass to Leonard Fournette for the first down, and one play later he launched a 39-yard touchdown pass to a blazing Scotty Miller.

The lead would swell to 28-10 early in the third quarter. On Green Bay's third play from scrimmage, Buccaneers safety Jordan Whitehead forced a fumble that linebacker Devin White recovered and brought back to the Packers 8-yard line. Brady then found tight end Cameron Brate wide open in the middle of the end zone for a touchdown.

The game, though, was far from over. Rodgers answered with a quick TD drive capped by an 8-yard pass to Robert Tonyan. Safety Adrian Amos then intercepted Brady, setting up another Packers touchdown on a short Rodgers-to-Davante Adams pass. The two-point conversion attempt failed, leaving the score at 28-23.

Green Bay would intercept passes on Tampa Bay's next two possessions as well, but couldn't capitalize. Ryan Succop's 46-yard field goal with just under five minutes remaining padded the visitor's lead, and although Green Bay subsequently worked its way to a 1st-and-goal from the 8-yard line, the Tampa Bay defense held, forcing a field goal with 2:05 to play.

The Packers never saw the ball again. The Bucs converted three first downs to run out the clock and head home... one win away from their second Super Bowl championship.

LAMBEAU FIELD | Green Bay
January 24, 2021

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Tampa Bay	7	14	7	3	31
Green Bay	0	10	13	3	26

1st Quarter
TB Mike Evans 15 pass from Tom Brady (Ryan Succop kick), 10:59

2nd Quarter
GB Marquez Valdes-Scantling 50 pass from Aaron Rodgers (Mason Crosby kick), 14:07
TB Leonard Fournette 20 run (Succop kick), 12:24
GB Crosby 24 FG, 4:59
TB Scotty Miller 39 pass from Brady (Succop kick), 0:01

3rd Quarter
TB Cameron Brate 8 pass from Brady (Succop kick), 13:54
GB Robert Tonyan 8 pass from Rodgers (Crosby kick), 9:28
GB Davante Adams 2 pass from Rodgers (pass failed), 0:24

4th Quarter
TB Succop 46 FG, 4:42
GB Crosby 26 FG, 2:05

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DARCIE GLAZER KASSEWITZ OWNER/PRESIDENT, GLAZER VISION FOUNDATION

Bryan Glazer

Edward Glazer

THE GLAZER FAMILY, in its 26th year owning the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, has worked tirelessly to support the Buccaneers franchise and brand since the late Malcolm Glazer acquired the team in 1995. Owners/Co-Chairmen Bryan, Edward, and Joel Glazer and Owner/President, Glazer Vision Foundation Darcie Glazer Kassewitz oversee the team's day-to-day operations.

After hiring two-time Associated Press NFL Coach of the Year Bruce Arians in 2019, the Glazer family worked closely with general manager Jason Licht to land six-time Super Bowl champion Tom Brady in 2020. In his first season with Tampa Bay, Brady helped lead the Buccaneers back to the Super Bowl while setting the franchise record for passing touchdowns in a single season.

Under the Glazer family's stewardship, the Buccaneers have made eight playoff appearances and two Super Bowls, winning the franchise's first championship in Super Bowl XXXVII following the 2002 season. This year's appearance in Super Bowl LV has the added historical significance of the Buccaneers becoming the first team to play in a Super Bowl in their home stadium.

The Glazer family was instrumental in the construction of Raymond James Stadium, which is hosting its third Super Bowl. Over the past several years, the Glazers have overseen a multi-phase project to enhance the stadium, including the installation of more than 31,000 square feet of new, state-of-the-art HD video boards, all new ribbon boards, four HD tower video displays in each corner of the stadium, and an all-new surround sound system. Additionally, the team completed a comprehensive transformation of all premium areas that included the redesign of all luxury suites, the introduction of two all-inclusive Hall of Fame Clubs, and a completely reimagined West Stadium Club. The most recent additions include an all-new 10,000-square-foot retail store, expansion of the Mercedes Hall of Fame Club, a new home team locker room, a redesigned Hyundai Club, and the debut of Bar 76 – a 10,000-square-foot, full-service premium sports bar.

Joel Glazer

Darcie Glazer Kassewitz

Dating back to their first days of team ownership, the Glazers have been active in the Tampa Bay community, creating initiatives that benefit children and families throughout the region. The family's foundation donated $5 million toward the construction of the Glazer Children's Museum, which opened in 2010 in Downtown Tampa. Additionally, the Glazer Vision Foundation is committed to providing full-service vision correction services and "Glasses For All Children" in Tampa Bay. The Buccaneers Foundation supports programs that address education disparity, gender equality, and social justice, and in 2020 established the Girls in Football Scholarship, becoming the first NFL team to offer a nationwide academic scholarship benefitting female high school football players.

In addition to their roles with the team, the Glazers are involved in various league and Super Bowl committees.

TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS TEAM OFFICIALS

Bryan Glazer
Owner/Co-Chairman

Joel Glazer
Owner/Co-Chairman

Edward Glazer
Owner/Co-Chairman

Darcie Glazer Kassewitz
Owner/President, Glazer Vision Foundation

Brian Ford
Chief Operating Officer

Jason Licht
General Manager

John Spytek
Director of Player Personnel

Mike Biehl
Director of College Scouting

Rob McCartney
Director of Pro Scouting

Mike Greenberg
Director of Football Administration

Shelton Quarles
Director of Football Operations

Spencer Dille
Director of Football Technology

Duke Preston
Director of Player Development

Andres Trescastro
Director of Team Security

Greg Skaggs
Director of Athlete Performance

David Hamilton
Director of Performance Science

Tim Jarocki
Director of Team Operations

Stephanie Koloff-O'Neill
Director of Performance Nutrition

Rob Julian
Director of Athletic Fields & Grounds

Bobby Slater
Head Athletic Trainer

Brad Berlin
Equipment Manager

Brett Greene
Video Director

Atul Khosla
Chief Corporate Development & Brand Officer

Joe Fada
Chief Financial Officer

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Vice President of Guest & Member Relations

Kristin Hamwey
Vice President of Human Resources

Nikki Donofrio
Vice President of Marketing

Deno Anagnost
Vice President of Ticket Sales

Martin Thorson
Vice President of Concessions & Retail Services

Byron Kiefer
Senior National Scout

Andy Speyer
National Scout

Shane Scannell
Pro Scout

Alex Smith
Pro Scout

Donovan Cotton
College Scout

Andre Forde
College Scout

Tony Hardie
College Scout

Tony Kinkela
College Scout

Antwon Murray
College Scout

BRUCE ARIANS Head Coach

BRUCE ARIANS was named the 12th head coach in Buccaneers franchise history on Jan. 8, 2019.

Arians is a two-time Associated Press NFL Coach of the Year, earning the award in 2012 (Indianapolis Colts) and in 2014 (Arizona Cardinals). He is the only coach in NFL history to earn the award multiple times in a three-year span with different teams and is one of only 12 coaches in NFL history to win the award multiple times.

In two seasons with Tampa Bay, Arians has compiled an 18-14 regular-season record and has posted a 3-0 record this postseason – his first with the team. He is the second coach in franchise history to lead the Buccaneers to the Super Bowl.

This season, Arians led the team to an 11-5 record, the second-most wins in a season in franchise history, helping guide the team to its first playoff berth since 2007. Under Arians' direction, Tampa Bay's offense set franchise records for both points scored (492) and touchdowns (59) this year, and over Arians' two seasons, the team leads the league in passing offense (296 yards per game) and ranks third in the NFL in total offense (391 yards per game).

A native of York, Pa., Arians played quarterback at Virginia Tech. He and his wife, Christine, have two children – their son, Jake, and daughter, Kristi Anne – as well as two granddaughters, Presley and Brylee, and grandsons Asher and Mills.

ASSISTANT COACHES

Keith Armstrong	*Special Teams Coordinator*
Todd Bowles	*Defensive Coordinator*
Harold Goodwin	*Assistant Head Coach/ Run Game Coordinator*
Byron Leftwich	*Offensive Coordinator*
Tim Atkins	*Defensive Quality Control*
Cory Bichey	*Assistant Strength & Conditioning*
Chris Boniol	*Specialists*
Mike Caldwell	*Inside Linebackers*
Mike Chiurco	*Assistant to the Head Coach*
Clyde Christensen	*Quarterbacks*
Rick Christophel	*Tight Ends*
Larry Foote	*Outside Linebackers*
Kevin Garver	*Wide Receivers*
Joe Gilbert	*Offensive Line*
Cody Grimm	*Defensive/Special Teams Assistant*
Maral Javadifar	*Assistant Strength & Conditioning*
Roger Kingdom	*Speed & Conditioning*
Lori Locust	*Assistant Defensive Line*
Todd McNair	*Running Backs*
Anthony Piroli	*Head Strength & Conditioning*
Antwaan Randle El	*Offensive Assistant*
Nick Rapone	*Safeties*
Kacy Rodgers	*Defensive Line*
Kevin Ross	*Cornerbacks*
Keith Tandy	*Defensive/Special Teams Assistant*
John Van Dam	*Offensive Quality Control*
Chad Wade	*Assistant Strength & Conditioning*

TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS ALPHABETICAL ROSTER

NO	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	BIRTH DATE	NFL EXP	COLLEGE	HOW ACQUIRED
26	Adams, Andrew	S	5-11	202	10/28/92	5	Connecticut	FA '19
82	Auclair, Antony	TE	6-6	256	5/28/93	4	Laval	FA '17
58	Barrett, Shaquil	OLB	6-2	250	11/17/92	7	Colorado State	UFA(Den) '19
12	Brady, Tom	QB	6-4	225	8/3/77	21	Michigan	UFA(NE) '20
84	Brate, Cameron	TE	6-5	245	7/3/91	6	Harvard	FA '15
81	Brown, Antonio	WR	5-10	185	7/10/88	10	Central Michigan	FA '20
41	Bucannon, Deone	LB	6-1	211	8/30/92	7	Washington State	FA '20
43	Cockrell, Ross	CB	6-0	191	8/6/91	7	Duke	FA '20
54	David, Lavonte	ILB	6-1	233	1/23/90	9	Nebraska	D2 '12
24	Davis III, Carlton	CB	6-1	206	12/31/96	3	Auburn	D2c '18
94	Davis, Khalil	DL	6-1	308	8/22/96	R	Nebraska	D6 '20
35	Dean, Jamel	CB	6-1	206	10/15/96	2	Auburn	D3a '19
32	Edwards, Mike	S	5-10	205	5/18/96	2	Kentucky	D3b '19
13	Evans, Mike	WR	6-5	231	8/21/93	7	Texas A&M	D1 '14
28	Fournette, Leonard	RB	6-0	228	1/18/95	4	LSU	FA '20
11	Gabbert, Blaine	QB	6-5	235	10/15/89	10	Missouri	FA '19
92	Gholston, William	DL	6-6	281	7/31/91	8	Michigan State	D4b '13
14	Godwin, Chris	WR	6-1	209	2/27/96	4	Penn State	D3a '17
49	Gill, Cam	OLB	6-3	240	12/14/97	R	Wagner	FA '20
4	Griffin, Ryan	QB	6-5	210	11/17/89	7	Tulane	W(ND) '15
87	Gronkowski, Rob	TE	6-6	265	5/14/89	10	Arizona	T(NE) '20
73	Haeg, Joe	T	6-6	298	3/11/93	5	North Dakota State	UFA(Ind) '20
88	Hudson, Tanner	TE	6-5	239	11/12/94	2	Southern Arkansas	FA '18
66	Jensen, Ryan	C	6-4	319	5/27/91	7	Colorado State-Pueblo	UFA(Bal) '18
18	Johnson, Tyler	WR	6-1	206	8/25/98	R	Minnesota	D5 '20
27	Jones II, Ronald	RB	5-11	208	8/3/97	3	USC	D2a '18
95	Ledbetter, Jeremiah	DL	6-3	295	6/2/94	2	Arkansas	FA '19
74	Marpet, Ali	G	6-4	307	4/17/93	6	Hobart	D2b '15
25	McCoy, LeSean	RB	5-11	210	7/12/88	12	Pittsburgh	UFA(KC) '20
98	McLendon, Steve	NT	6-3	310	1/3/86	11	Troy	T(NYJ) '20
85	Mickens, Jaydon	WR	5-11	170	4/21/94	3	Washington	FA '19
10	Miller, Scotty	WR	5-9	174	7/31/97	2	Bowling Green	D6 '19
51	Minter, Kevin	ILB	6-0	246	12/3/90	8	LSU	FA '18
23	Murphy-Bunting, Sean	CB	6-0	195	6/19/97	2	Central Michigan	D2 '19
98	Nelson, Anthony	OLB	6-7	271	3/4/97	2	Iowa	D4 '19
56	Nuñez-Roches, Rakeem	DL	6-2	307	7/3/93	6	Southern Miss	FA '18
79	O'Connor, Patrick	DL	6-4	270	11/1/93	2	Eastern Michigan	FA '17
90	Pierre-Paul, Jason	OLB	6-5	275	1/1/89	11	USF	T(NYG) '18
8	Pinion, Bradley	P	6-5	229	6/1/94	6	Clemson	UFA(SF) '19
76	Smith, Donovan	T	6-6	338	6/23/93	6	Penn State	D2a '15
29	Smith, Ryan	CB	5-11	189	9/7/93	5	North Carolina Central	D4 '16
64	Stinnie, Aaron	G	6-3	312	2/18/94	3	James Madison	W(Ten) '19
3	Succop, Ryan	K	6-2	218	9/19/86	12	South Carolina	FA '20
93	Suh, Ndamukong	DL	6-4	313	1/6/87	11	Nebraska	UFA (LAR) '19
97	Triner, Zach	LS	6-3	245	1/30/91	2	Assumption	FA '19
30	Vaughn, Ke'Shawn	RB	5-10	214	5/4/97	R	Vanderbilt	D3 '20
70	Watford, Earl	OL	6-4	295	6/24/90	8	James Madison	FA '20
17	Watson, Justin	WR	6-3	215	4/4/96	3	Pennsylvania	D5 '18
72	Wells, Josh	T	6-6	306	2/14/91	6	James Madison	FA '19
45	White, Devin	ILB	6-0	237	2/17/98	2	LSU	D1 '19
33	Whitehead, Jordan	S	5-10	198	3/18/97	3	Pittsburgh	D4 '18
31	Winfield Jr., Antoine	S	5-9	203	8/16/98	R	Minnesota	D2 '20
78	Wirfs, Tristan	T	6-5	320	1/24/99	R	Iowa	D1 '20

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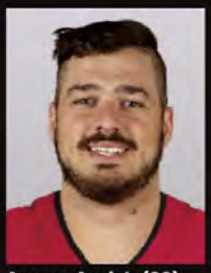
TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS

Andrew Adams (26)
Safety



Antony Auclair (82)
Tight End

Shaquil Barrett (58)
Outside Linebacker

Tom Brady (12)
Quarterback

Cameron Brate (84)
Tight End

Antonio Brown (81)
Wide Receiver

Deone Bucannon (41)
Linebacker

Ross Cockrell (43)
Cornerback

Lavonte David (54)
Inside Linebacker

Carlton Davis III (24)
Cornerback

Khalil Davis (94)
Defensive Lineman

Jamel Dean (35)
Cornerback

Mike Edwards (32)
Safety

Mike Evans (13)
Wide Receiver

Leonard Fournette (28)
Running Back

Blaine Gabbert (11)
Quarterback

William Gholston (92)
Defensive Lineman

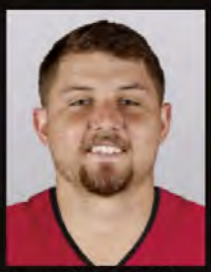
Chris Godwin (14)
Wide Receiver

Cam Gill (49)
Outside Linebacker

Ryan Griffin (4)
Quarterback

Rob Gronkowski (87)
Tight End

Joe Haeg (73)
Tackle



Tanner Hudson (88)
Tight End

Ryan Jensen (66)
Center

Tyler Johnson (18)
Wide Receiver

Ronald Jones II (27)
Running Back

Jeremiah Ledbetter (95)
Defensive Lineman

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TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS

Ali Marpet (74)
Guard

LeSean McCoy (25)
Running Back

Steve McLendon (96)
Nose Tackle

Jaydon Mickens (85)
Wide Receiver

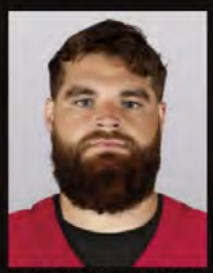
Scotty Miller (10)
Wide Receiver

Kevin Minter (51)
Inside Linebacker

Sean Murphy-Bunting (23)
Cornerback

Anthony Nelson (98)
Outside Linebacker

Rakeem Nuñez-Roches (56)
Defensive Lineman



Patrick O'Connor (79)
Defensive Lineman

Jason Pierre-Paul (90)
Outside Linebacker

Bradley Pinion (8)
Punter

Donovan Smith (76)
Tackle

Ryan Smith (29)
Cornerback

Aaron Stinnie (64)
Guard

Ryan Succop (3)
Kicker

Ndamukong Suh (93)
Defensive Lineman

Zach Triner (97)
Long Snapper

Ke'Shawn Vaughn (30)
Running Back

Earl Watford (70)
Offensive Lineman

Justin Watson (17)
Wide Receiver

Josh Wells (72)
Tackle

Devin White (45)
Inside Linebacker

Jordan Whitehead (33)
Safety

Antoine Winfield Jr. (31)
Safety

Tristan Wirfs (78)
Tackle

TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS
STATS/ROSTER/LINEUPS

STATISTICAL LEADERS

PASSING	COMP-ATT	PCT	YDS	TD	INT	RTNG
TOM **BRADY**	401-610	65.7	4633	40	12	102.2
BLAINE **GABBERT**	9-16	56.3	143	2	0	125.6

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
RONALD **JONES II**	192	978	5.1	98	7
LEONARD **FOURNETTE**	97	367	3.8	46	6

RECEIVING	NO	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
MIKE **EVANS**	70	1006	14.4	50	13
CHRIS **GODWIN**	65	840	12.9	47	7
ROB **GRONKOWSKI**	45	623	13.8	48	7
ANTONIO **BROWN**	45	483	10.7	46	4
LEONARD **FOURNETTE**	36	233	6.5	20	0
SCOTTY **MILLER**	33	501	15.2	48	3

DEFENSE	TACKLES	ASSISTS	TOTAL	SACKS	PD	FF
DEVIN **WHITE**	97	43	140	9.0	4	1
LAVONTE **DAVID**	82	35	117	1.5	6	3
ANTOINE **WINFIELD JR.**	61	30	91	3.0	6	2
JORDAN **WHITEHEAD**	53	21	74	2.0	4	1
CARLTON **DAVIS III**	52	16	68	0.0	18	0
SEAN **MURPHY-BUNTING**	51	15	66	0.0	3	1
JAMEL **DEAN**	48	11	59	0.0	7	0
SHAQUIL **BARRETT**	43	14	57	8.0	3	2

INTERCEPTIONS	NO	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
CARLTON **DAVIS III**	4	42	10.5	34	0

Mike Edwards, Jason Pierre-Paul, and Jordan Whitehead each with 2 interceptions

KICK RETURNS	RET	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
JAYDON **MICKENS**	14	340	24.3	34	0

PUNT RETURNS	RET	FC	AVG	LONG	TD
JAYDON **MICKENS**	16	12	6.2	14	0

PUNTING	NO	AVG	NET	TCHBK	IN/20	LONG
BRADLEY **PINION**	55	45.2	40.2	2	19	62

FIELD GOALS	TOTAL	1-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50+
RYAN **SUCCOP**	28/31	1/1	10/10	9/9	7/9	1/2

OFFENSIVE DEPTH CHART

WR	13	**MIKE EVANS**
	10	SCOTTY MILLER
TE	87	**ROB GRONKOWSKI**
	88	TANNER HUDSON
LT	76	**DONOVAN SMITH**
	72	JOSH WELLS
LG	74	**ALI MARPET**
C	66	**RYAN JENSEN**
RG	64	**AARON STINNIE**
	70	EARL WATFORD
RT	78	**TRISTAN WIRFS**
	73	JOE HAEG
TE	84	**CAMERON BRATE**
	82	ANTONY AUCLAIR
WR	14	**CHRIS GODWIN**
	81	ANTONIO BROWN
QB	12	**TOM BRADY**
	11	BLAINE GABBERT
RB	27	**RONALD JONES II**
	28	LEONARD FOURNETTE

DEFENSIVE DEPTH CHART

DL	93	**NDAMUKONG SUH**
	94	KHALIL DAVIS
NT	58	**RAKEEM NUÑEZ-ROCHES**
	96	STEVE McLENDON
DL	92	**WILLIAM GHOLSTON**
	79	PATRICK O'CONNOR
OLB	90	**JASON PIERRE-PAUL**
	98	ANTHONY NELSON
ILB	45	**DEVIN WHITE**
	51	KEVIN MINTER
ILB	54	**LAVONTE DAVID**
OLB	58	**SHAQUIL BARRETT**
	49	CAM GILL
CB	24	**CARLTON DAVIS III**
	43	ROSS COCKRELL
CB	35	**JAMEL DEAN**
	23	SEAN MURPHY-BUNTING
S	31	**ANTOINE WINFIELD JR.**
	32	MIKE EDWARDS
S	33	**JORDAN WHITEHEAD**
	26	ANDREW ADAMS

SPECIALISTS DEPTH CHART

P	8	**BRADLEY PINION**
PK	3	**RYAN SUCCOP**
KO	8	**BRADLEY PINION**
H	8	**BRADLEY PINION**
LS	97	**ZACH TRINER**
PR	85	**JAYDON MICKENS**
	81	ANTONIO BROWN
KR	85	**JAYDON MICKENS**
	18	TYLER JOHNSON

NUMERICAL ROSTER

3	RYAN **SUCCOP**	K
4	RYAN **GRIFFIN**	QB
8	BRADLEY **PINION**	P
10	SCOTTY **MILLER**	WR
11	BLAINE **GABBERT**	QB
12	TOM **BRADY**	QB
13	MIKE **EVANS**	WR
14	CHRIS **GODWIN**	WR
17	JUSTIN **WATSON**	WR
18	TYLER **JOHNSON**	WR
23	SEAN **MURPHY-BUNTING**	CB
24	CARLTON **DAVIS III**	CB
25	LeSEAN **McCOY**	RB
26	ANDREW **ADAMS**	S
27	RONALD **JONES II**	RB
28	LEONARD **FOURNETTE**	RB
29	RYAN **SMITH**	CB
30	KE'SHAWN **VAUGHN**	RB
31	ANTOINE **WINFIELD JR.**	S
32	MIKE **EDWARDS**	S
33	JORDAN **WHITEHEAD**	S
35	JAMEL **DEAN**	CB
41	DEONE **BUCANNON**	LB
43	ROSS **COCKRELL**	CB
45	DEVIN **WHITE**	ILB
49	CAM **GILL**	OLB
51	KEVIN **MINTER**	ILB
54	LAVONTE **DAVID**	ILB
56	RAKEEM **NUÑEZ-ROCHES**	DL
58	SHAQUIL **BARRETT**	OLB
64	AARON **STINNIE**	G
66	RYAN **JENSEN**	C
70	EARL **WATFORD**	OL
72	JOSH **WELLS**	T
73	JOE **HAEG**	T
74	ALI **MARPET**	G
76	DONOVAN **SMITH**	T
78	TRISTAN **WIRFS**	T
79	PATRICK **O'CONNOR**	DL
81	ANTONIO **BROWN**	WR
82	ANTONY **AUCLAIR**	TE
84	CAMERON **BRATE**	TE
85	JAYDON **MICKENS**	WR
87	ROB **GRONKOWSKI**	TE
88	TANNER **HUDSON**	TE
90	JASON **PIERRE-PAUL**	OLB
92	WILLIAM **GHOLSTON**	DL
93	NDAMUKONG **SUH**	DL
94	KHALIL **DAVIS**	DL
95	JEREMIAH **LEDBETTER**	DL
96	STEVE **McLENDON**	NT
97	ZACH **TRINER**	LS
98	ANTHONY **NELSON**	OLB

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KANSAS CITY CHIEFS
STATS/ROSTER/LINEUPS

STATISTICAL LEADERS

PASSING	COMP-ATT	PCT	YDS	TD	INT	RTNG
PATRICK **MAHOMES**	390-588	66.3	4740	38	6	108.2
CHAD **HENNE**	28-38	73.7	248	2	0	108.2

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
CLYDE **EDWARDS-HELAIRE**	181	803	4.4	31	4
PATRICK **MAHOMES**	62	308	5.0	24	2
LE'VEON **BELL**	63	254	4.0	16	2
DARREL **WILLIAMS**	39	169	4.3	13	1

RECEIVING	NO	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
TRAVIS **KELCE**	105	1416	13.5	45	11
TYREEK **HILL**	87	1276	14.7	75	15
DEMARCUS **ROBINSON**	45	466	10.4	28	3
MECOLE **HARDMAN**	41	560	13.7	49	4
SAMMY **WATKINS**	37	421	11.4	37	2

DEFENSE	TACKLES	ASSISTS	TOTAL	SACKS	PD	FF
DANIEL **SORENSEN**	68	23	91	0.0	5	2
ANTHONY **HITCHENS**	44	34	78	0.0	1	0
DAMIEN **WILSON**	43	27	70	0.0	1	1
TYRANN **MATHIEU**	48	14	62	0.0	9	0
CHARVARIUS **WARD**	38	13	51	1.0	6	0
DERRICK **NNADI**	23	24	47	0.0	0	0
BEN **NIEMANN**	29	14	43	1.0	0	1

INTERCEPTIONS	NO	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
TYRANN **MATHIEU**	6	70	11.7	25	1

L'Jarius Sneed and Daniel Sorensen each with 3 interceptions

KICK RETURNS	RET	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
BYRON **PRINGLE**	10	324	32.4	102	1

PUNT RETURNS	RET	FC	AVG	LONG	TD
MECOLE **HARDMAN**	25	13	7.0	67	1

PUNTING	NO	AVG	NET	TCHBK	IN/20	LONG
TOMMY **TOWNSEND**	52	45.0	40.4	6	20	67

FIELD GOALS	TOTAL	1-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50+
HARRISON **BUTKER**	25/27	2/2	7/7	9/9	3/5	4/4

OFFENSIVE DEPTH CHART

WR	10	**TYREEK HILL**
	17	MECOLE HARDMAN
LT	72	**ERIC FISHER**
	74	MARTINAS RANKIN
LG	73	**NICK ALLEGRETTI**
	61	STEFEN WISNIEWSKI
C	62	**AUSTIN REITER**
	67	DANIEL KILGORE
RG	77	**ANDREW WYLIE**
	61	STEFEN WISNIEWSKI
RT	75	**MIKE REMMERS**
	74	MARTINAS RANKIN
TE	87	**TRAVIS KELCE**
	48	NICK KEIZER
WR	14	**SAMMY WATKINS**
	11	DEMARCUS ROBINSON
QB	15	**PATRICK MAHOMES**
	4	CHAD HENNE
RB	25	**CLYDE EDWARDS-HELAIRE**
	26	LE'VEON BELL
FB	42	**ANTHONY SHERMAN**

DEFENSIVE DEPTH CHART

LDE	92	**TANOH KPASSAGNON**
	57	ALEX OKAFOR
LDT	95	**CHRIS JONES**
	98	TERSHAWN WHARTON
RDT	91	**DERRICK NNADI**
	64	MIKE PENNEL
RDE	55	**FRANK CLARK**
	51	MIKE DANNA
LB	53	**ANTHONY HITCHENS**
	56	BEN NIEMANN
LB	54	**DAMIEN WILSON**
	50	WILLIE GAY
LCB	35	**CHARVARIUS WARD**
	38	L'JARIUS SNEED
RCB	21	**BASHAUD BREELAND**
	27	RASHAD FENTON
CB	27	**RASHAD FENTON**
	20	ANTONIO HAMILTON
FS	49	**DANIEL SORENSEN**
	22	JUAN THORNHILL
SS	32	**TYRANN MATHIEU**

SPECIALISTS DEPTH CHART

P	5	**TOMMY TOWNSEND**
PK	7	**HARRISON BUTKER**
	5	TOMMY TOWNSEND
H	5	**TOMMY TOWNSEND**
LS	41	**JAMES WINCHESTER**
PR	17	**MECOLE HARDMAN**
	10	TYREEK HILL
KR	17	**MECOLE HARDMAN**
	13	BYRON PRINGLE

NUMERICAL ROSTER

4	CHAD **HENNE**	QB
5	TOMMY **TOWNSEND**	P
7	HARRISON **BUTKER**	K
10	TYREEK **HILL**	WR
11	DEMARCUS **ROBINSON**	WR
13	BYRON **PRINGLE**	WR
14	SAMMY **WATKINS**	WR
15	PATRICK **MAHOMES**	QB
17	MECOLE **HARDMAN**	WR
20	ANTONIO **HAMILTON**	CB
21	BASHAUD **BREELAND**	CB
22	JUAN **THORNHILL**	S
23	ARMANI **WATTS**	S
25	CLYDE **EDWARDS-HELAIRE**	RB
26	LE'VEON **BELL**	RB
27	RASHAD **FENTON**	CB
29	BOPETE **KEYES**	CB
31	DARREL **WILLIAMS**	RB
32	TYRANN **MATHIEU**	S
34	DARWIN **THOMPSON**	RB
35	CHARVARIUS **WARD**	CB
38	L'JARIUS **SNEED**	CB
41	JAMES **WINCHESTER**	LS
42	ANTHONY **SHERMAN**	FB
44	DORIAN **O'DANIEL**	LB
47	DARIUS **HARRIS**	LB
48	NICK **KEIZER**	TE
49	DANIEL **SORENSEN**	S
50	WILLIE **GAY**	LB
51	MIKE **DANNA**	DE
53	ANTHONY **HITCHENS**	LB
54	DAMIEN **WILSON**	LB
55	FRANK **CLARK**	DE
56	BEN **NIEMANN**	LB
57	ALEX **OKAFOR**	DE
61	STEFEN **WISNIEWSKI**	G
62	AUSTIN **REITER**	C
64	MIKE **PENNEL**	DT
67	DANIEL **KILGORE**	C
72	ERIC **FISHER**	T
73	NICK **ALLEGRETTI**	G
74	MARTINAS **RANKIN**	T
75	MIKE **REMMERS**	T
77	ANDREW **WYLIE**	G
79	YASIR **DURANT**	OL
83	RICKY **SEALS-JONES**	TE
87	TRAVIS **KELCE**	TE
90	TIM **WARD**	DE
91	DERRICK **NNADI**	DT
92	TANOH **KPASSAGNON**	DE
95	CHRIS **JONES**	DT
98	TERSHAWN **WHARTON**	DT
99	KHALEN **SAUNDERS**	DT

CHIEFS PREPARE AN ENCORE PERFORMANCE

BY MARK PRESTON

THERE AREN'T MANY things more difficult than winning the Super Bowl. So much has to go right; so little can go wrong.

Given that, the idea of winning two consecutive Super Bowls is an especially monumental challenge. Only eight times in the history of the NFL has a team repeated as Super Bowl champions, and it's a feat that has become even more rare in recent times. The last team to do it was the New England Patriots, who went back-to-back in Super Bowls XXXVIII and XXXIX.

And three in a row? Never.

But if ever there were a team built for such an achievement, it is these Kansas City Chiefs, who boast a brilliantly balanced and deep roster headed by quarterback Patrick Mahomes. Since taking over signal-calling duties in 2018, he and the Chiefs have continually raised the bar of expectation for themselves. In truth, only moments after lifting the Lombardi Trophy last year, some Chiefs were already using the "D" word.

"The dynasty is just starting, baby," tight end Travis Kelce said following the team's 31-20 win over the 49ers in Super Bowl LIV. "We're motivated to do it again, for sure."

That motivation, along with an enviable mix of talent, has fueled head coach Andy Reid's squad throughout this season, producing a franchise-best 14-2 record, the AFC West title, and the conference's top seed in the playoffs. This marked the third consecutive season that the Chiefs won at least 12 games, and for the second straight year they finished with both a top-10 scoring offense (29.6 ppg, sixth-best) and defense (22.6 ppg, tied for 10th).

The team's balance is reflected in its seven Pro Bowl selections: four on offense (Mahomes, Kelce, wideout Tyreek Hill, tackle Eric Fisher) and three on defense (defensive tackle Chris Jones, safety Tyrann Mathieu, and defensive end Frank Clark).

The Chiefs won their first four games, and after dropping a Week 5 decision to the Las Vegas Raiders, rattled off 10 consecutive wins

Doug Murray/AP Images

Patrick Mahomes has brought the Chiefs back to the Super Bowl following a stellar 2020 campaign that saw him throw for 4,740 yards and 38 touchdowns.

Doug Murray/AP Images

Reed Hoffmann/AP Images

The league's best wide receiver/tight end duo resides in Kansas City. Tyreek Hill (left) caught 87 passes and set a career high with 15 touchdown receptions, while Travis Kelce (right) became the first tight end in NFL history with multiple 100-catch seasons. His 105 receptions also set a franchise record, with 11 going for TDs.

2020 RESULTS

KANSAS CITY CHIEFS (16-2)

Date	Opponent	Score	W/L
9/10	HOUSTON	34-20	W
9/20	L.A. Chargers	23-20	W
9/28	Baltimore	34-20	W
10/5	NEW ENGLAND	26-10	W
10/11	LAS VEGAS	32-40	L
10/19	Buffalo	26-17	W
10/25	Denver	43-16	W
11/1	N.Y. JETS	35-9	W
11/8	CAROLINA	33-31	W
11/22	Las Vegas	35-31	W
11/29	Tampa Bay	27-24	W
12/6	DENVER	22-16	W
12/13	Miami	33-27	W
12/20	New Orleans	32-29	W
12/27	ATLANTA	17-14	W
1/3	L.A. CHARGERS	21-38	L
AFC Playoffs			
1/17	CLEVELAND	22-17	W
1/24	BUFFALO	38-24	W

to secure their spot atop the AFC. Every week was a challenge; none of the team's final seven regular-season wins came by more than six points, but they *did* win. And gutting out a victory when the opponent is giving you its best is the definition of a champion.

"As long as I've been here, the message has been the same every week," Mahomes explains. "Just find a way to win."

OFFENSE

Offensive coordinator Eric Bieniemy's unit is one of the most potent the NFL ever has seen. In both quantity and quality of offensive weapons, the Chiefs are unmatched. If the Chiefs can't beat you one way, they'll beat you 14 other ways.

Mahomes gets it all started, and there's little the reigning Super Bowl MVP can't do. He's adept at quick throws, deep drops, throwing on the run, and even throwing left-handed. That's on top of tucking the ball away on the rare occasion when a receiver isn't open and an assortment of designed runs, all to keep defenses guessing what's coming next. Sometimes Mahomes might not even know. What we do know is that it usually works.

The stats bear that out. Mahomes was one of only two starting quarterbacks to throw a touchdown pass in every game he played this season, and he finished second in the league in passing yards (4,740), fourth in TD passes (38), and third in passer rating (108.2). And, oh yeah, he also rushed for 308 yards and two scores.

Having Kelce on the field with him certainly helps. The 31-year-old tight end, in his eighth pro season, amassed 1,416 receiving yards – a NFL single-season record for his position – while hauling in a franchise-best 105 receptions for 11 touchdowns. Talk about dependable: In 146 targets, Kelce had just one drop.

Hill is perhaps the game's premier deep threat, with his 24 touchdown catches of 25-or-more yards the most in the league since 2017. He finished with 15 receiving TDs this season, second-best in the NFL and tied for the franchise's single-season record.

Yet Hill wouldn't put up those numbers without other speedsters drawing their share of attention. The Chiefs' "Legion of Zoom" includes second-year wideout Mecole Hardman, who chipped in with 41 catches for 560 yards and four TDs, Demarcus Robinson (45 catches, 466 yards), and Sammy Watkins (37 catches, 421 yards, 2 TDs in only 10 games).

While the aerial attack is the cornerstone of the game plan, the ground game is potent in its own right. Rookie Clyde Edwards-Helaire,

Perry Hoffmann/AP Images

Jeffrey T. Barnes/AP Images

It would be a mistake to underestimate the Chiefs' defense. Defensive end Frank Clark (left) brings pressure off the edge and finished the regular season with six sacks and 15 quarterback hurries. Safety Tyrann Mathieu (right) protects against the deep ball; he led the Chiefs with six interceptions to go with nine passes defensed and 62 tackles.

DEFINING MOMENT FOR THE GAME

HAVING PLAYERS and coaches mic'd up these days is an essential part of almost any major sports telecast. But rewind to Jan. 11, 1970, and it was a different world.

That was the day of Super Bowl IV between the Chiefs and the Vikings. And NFL Films had just scored a coup. Ed Sabol and his son, Steve, the founders of the fledgling video company, convinced Chiefs head coach Hank Stram to wear a microphone on the sidelines for the game. It was the first time it would happen at a Super Bowl. Not only did it set the groundwork for innovations to follow, it gave rise to a new definition.

AP Images

Chiefs coach Hank Stram broke new ground when he wore a microphone during Super Bowl IV.

Over the course of the Chiefs' 24-7 win, the Sabols drew insights from the mind of the future Hall of Fame coach. There's nearly 22 minutes of video and sound – some of it berating officials and others showing his confidence, particularly in the play "65 toss power trap" (which resulted in a Mike Garrett TD run).

But one phrase raised eyebrows and even some confusion. Stram implored his team to "keep matriculating the ball down the field." Matriculating? The word, with its origins in Medieval Latin, was commonly associated with enrolling in college, not anything to do with football.

No one knows for sure whether Stram intended a different word or was just testing the elasticity of the English language, but his usage caught on, and an internet search shows the word "matriculate" is now used by media, coaches, and players alike to explain an offense advancing the football toward the goal line.

Stram embraced it as well, going as far to say in his 2003 Hall of Fame enshrinement speech, "As I matriculate my way down the field of life, I will never forget this moment and you wonderful people who helped make this day possible."

taken with the final pick of the first round in the 2020 draft, finished the regular season with 803 rushing yards, while also catching 36 passes and scoring five times overall. He placed fourth among rookies with 1,100 yards from scrimmage.

The trio of Le'Veon Bell, Darwin Thompson, and Darrel Williams rotate in behind Edwards-Helaire. Williams delivered the most punishing runs in the playoff matchup against the Browns, rushing for 78 yards on 13 carries.

The offensive line is reshuffled from a year ago, but still provides Mahomes with the protection he needs to extend plays. According to *Pro Football Focus*, right tackle Mike Remmers was the team's best pass-blocker. Fisher, the first overall pick in the 2013 draft, continues to be one of the game's elite left tackles.

DEFENSE

The success of Kansas City's offense tends to deflect the spotlight from its defensive corps. But make no mistake: Defensive coordinator Steve Spagnuolo's unit features some of the most dynamic talents in the NFL.

Spagnuolo implemented a 4-3 defense upon his arrival in 2019, and the results may have been as big a factor as any in the team's

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Harrison Butker has been nearly automatic in his four seasons as the Chiefs' field goal kicker, converting 90.3 percent of his attempts. This year, he was perfect on all four of his tries from 50-plus yards, which included a career-long 58 yarder. The 25-year-old was signed as a free agent out of Georgia Tech in 2017.

KANSAS CITY CHIEFS ALL-TIME PLAYOFF RESULTS

(15 wins, 19 losses)

Year	Playoffs	Opponent	Final	W/L
1962	AFL Championship *(Won as Dallas Texans, moved to Kansas City in 1963)*	at Houston Oilers	20-17 (OT)	W
1966	AFL Championship	at Buffalo	31-7	W
	Super Bowl I	**Green Bay**	**10-35**	**L**
1968	AFL Divisional	at Oakland Raiders	6-41	L
1969	AFL Divisional	at New York Jets	13-6	W
	AFL Championship	at Oakland Raiders	17-7	W
	Super Bowl IV	**Minnesota**	**23-7**	**W**
1971	AFC Divisional	Miami	24-27 (2 OT)	L
1986	AFC Wild Card	at New York Jets	15-35	L
1990	AFC Wild Card	at Miami	16-17	L
1991	AFC Wild Card	Los Angeles Raiders	10-6	W
	AFC Divisional	at Buffalo	14-37	L
1992	AFC Wild Card	at San Diego Chargers	0-17	L
1993	AFC Wild Card	Pittsburgh	27-24 (OT)	W
	AFC Divisional	at Houston Oilers	28-20	W
	AFC Championship	at Buffalo	13-30	L
1994	AFC Wild Card	at Miami	17-27	L
1995	AFC Divisional	Indianapolis	7-10	L
1997	AFC Divisional	Denver	10-14	L
2003	AFC Divisional	Indianapolis	31-38	L
2006	AFC Wild Card	at Indianapolis	8-23	L
2010	AFC Wild Card	Baltimore	7-30	L
2013	AFC Wild Card	at Indianapolis	44-45	L
2015	AFC Wild Card	at Houston	30-0	W
	AFC Divisional	at New England	20-27	L
2016	AFC Divisional	Pittsburgh	16-18	L
2017	AFC Wild Card	Tennessee	21-22	L
2018	AFC Divisional	Indianapolis	31-13	W
	AFC Championship	New England	31-37 (OT)	L
2019	AFC Divisional	Houston	51-31	W
	AFC Championship	Tennessee	35-24	W
	Super Bowl LIV	**San Francisco**	**31-20**	**W**
2020	AFC Divisional	Cleveland	22-17	W
	AFC Championship	Buffalo	38-24	W

ascent from contender to champion. The Chiefs' 22.6 points allowed per game tied for fifth-best in the AFC, and nine times during the regular season they held an opponent to 20-points-or-fewer. When considering the team's up-tempo offense, those numbers become even more impressive.

Reid appreciates the way the team's defense has grown and evolved on Spagnuolo's watch.

"It's a tribute to the guys involved with it," Reid says. "You start with Spags and his ability to organize and lead. You take the assistant coaches and their ability to get done what Spags wants to get done and still add their personality to it. The players, likewise, they've bought in from the get-go. Spags just started off with a small package, and then every week, he'd add a little something onto it that he thought the players would be comfortable with and still be able to execute at a high level. The players love that, and they've played with great energy."

Few play with more energy than Mathieu, who effectively serves as the quarterback of the defense. He's at the top of any conversation about the most versatile players in the league, given his ability to cover, blitz, and tackle. This season, he ranked third in the NFL with six interceptions – a career high – and also recorded nine passes defensed, three tackles-for-loss, a fumble recovery, and a touchdown. It's not a coincidence that his arrival in Kansas City mirrored the defense's jump in performance.

Another force in the secondary is safety Daniel Sorensen, who led the team in both solo (68) and total (91) tackles. The hard-hitting 30-year-old also had two forced fumbles and grabbed three interceptions. Linebackers Anthony Hitchens and Damien Wilson were next in total tackles, with 78 and 70, respectively.

A key addition on defense has been rookie L'Jarius Sneed. The fourth-round pick notched interceptions in his first two games, and although a broken collarbone sidelined him for several weeks, he still finished with 41 total tackles and three interceptions. In the playoff game vs. the Browns, Sneed had six tackles and a sack.

It all starts with pressure and containment up front. Jones is among the league's top interior pass-rushers and led the Chiefs in pressures (60), QB hits (28), and sacks (7.5) this season. And look back to last year's Super Bowl. A forgotten story in that game were Jones' big efforts, which included three passes defensed.

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AFC CHAMPIONSHIP GAME

KANSAS CITY 38
Buffalo 24

AFTER A NUMBER OF CLOSE CALLS across the second half of the season, the Kansas City Chiefs reminded everyone what they're capable of doing on offense. They exploded for their second-highest point total of the year to defeat the Bills and set up a contest between the last two quarterbacks to win the Super Bowl.

The Chiefs found themselves in an early hole, trailing 9-0 after one quarter before getting on track. They scored touchdowns on three consecutive second-quarter possessions to take control and never looked back. A 3-yard Patrick Mahomes-to-Mecole Hardman TD pass put the hosts on the scoreboard, and after forcing a Buffalo punt, they were on the move again. On first down from their own 18, Hardman took an end-around down the left sideline for a 50-yard pickup, and four plays later Darrel Williams burst 6 yards up the middle for a touchdown to give the Chiefs a lead they would never relinquish.

Kansas City gained separation with a pair of second-half touchdowns. The first was set up by a short pass to Tyreek Hill that he took 71 yards before being pushed out of bounds at the Bills 4-yard line. Two plays later, Mahomes' quick toss to Travis Kelce resulted in a 1-yard TD. Buffalo tried to rally on its next possession, but a Rashad Fenton interception ended the threat. That led to an 11-play K.C. drive and another Kelce scoring grab that essentially ended any suspense.

Mahomes finished the game completing 29 of 38 passes for 325 yards and three TDs. Kelce (13 catches) and Hill (9 catches) each topped 100 receiving yards for the second week in a row, while Williams was the team's leading rusher, finishing with 52 yards on 13 carries.

The Chiefs' defense did its part, with Frank Clark responsible for two of the team's four sacks. Anthony Hitchens led the way with eight tackles, and Juan Thornhill was credited with four passes defensed.

With the win, the Chiefs return to the Super Bowl for the second straight year, where Mahomes, the MVP of Super Bowl LIV, will take the field opposite Tom Brady, who led the Patriots to victory in Super Bowl LIII. The two last met in the playoffs in the 2018 AFC title game, a contest won by the Patriots in OT.

ARROWHEAD STADIUM | Kansas City
January 24, 2021

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Buffalo	9	3	3	9	24
Kansas City	0	21	10	7	38

1st Quarter
BUF Tyler Bass 51 FG, 11:27
BUF Dawson Knox 3 pass from Josh Allen (kick failed), 6:14

2nd Quarter
KC Mecole Hardman 3 pass from Patrick Mahomes (Harrison Butker kick), 14:16
KC Darrel Williams 6 run (Butker kick), 9:35
KC Clyde Edwards-Helaire 1 run (Butker kick), 4:12
BUF Bass 20 FG, 0:11

3rd Quarter
KC Butker 45 FG, 10:48
BUF Bass 27 FG, 5:49
KC Travis Kelce 1 pass from Mahomes (Butker kick), 3:29

4th Quarter
KC Kelce 5 pass from Mahomes (Butker kick), 7:36
BUF Isaiah McKenzie 6 pass from Allen (pass failed), 4:08
BUF Bass 51 FG, 3:14

SPECIAL TEAMS

Harrison Butker has proven himself as one of the NFL's most reliable kickers, this year connecting on 25-of-27 field goal attempts. He also showed off his strong leg with a pair of career-long 58-yarders, the second one in OT, in an early-season victory over the Chargers. Rookie Tommy Townsend netted a solid 40.4 yards on 52 punts during the regular season.

Byron Pringle is a prolific kickoff returner, averaging 32.4 yards per return with one TD – a 102-yarder in Week 7 against the Broncos. Hardman is a similar threat on kickoffs and punts; he had a 67-yard punt return for a score.

GAME PLAN

The Chiefs are regaled for their explosiveness, but the trait that has made them champions is their resilience. It was on full display throughout the 2019 playoffs, when they trailed by double figures in all three games, and shined through once again in difficult spots this postseason. If there's a lesson here, it's that they know how to fight through adversity and win.

First and foremost, the Chiefs want to put opponents on their heels by unleashing their offensive firepower from the first snap. Basically, it's Mahomes to "fill-in-the-blank." But if that doesn't work, there won't be any panic. Reid's group will simply grind it out, finding ways to manufacture points on offense and making enough stops on defense. Remember, this is a team that won scoring 17 points vs. Atlanta, 22 vs. Denver, and 23 against the L.A. Chargers.

A lot of that composure comes directly from the head coach. Reid's teams are prepared and confident, and they're acutely aware when to play the long game and when to go for the jugular. Add to that the experience of having been there, done that – the Chiefs are one play away in the 2018 AFC title game from this being their third straight Super Bowl appearance – and you can be assured that nerves won't be a factor.

"Experience matters," Reid says. "You can stand there and tell the guys it's going to be faster every step you take; the competition level is going to be ridiculous. Immediately, you're going to get their best. I think for our guys to have experienced it all last year could prove to be very important."

__Mark Preston__ is a veteran freelance writer based in Connecticut who has written for the Official Super Bowl Game Program *for the past 18 years.*

CLARK HUNT CHAIRMAN AND CEO

CLARK HUNT HAS BEEN involved in the leadership of the Kansas City Chiefs for nearly two decades and currently serves as the club's chairman and CEO.

Hunt has been the driving force behind the resurgence of the Chiefs, transforming the iconic franchise into one of the most successful teams in the NFL. The Chiefs have earned six AFC West Division championships and eight playoff appearances since Hunt took over as CEO in 2010. Last month, Hunt once again hoisted the award that bears his father's name – the Lamar Hunt Trophy – as the club claimed its second straight AFC championship. The Chiefs are making consecutive Super Bowl appearances for the first time in franchise history and their fourth Super Bowl appearance overall.

In January 2013, Hunt modified the leadership structure of the organization, announcing that for the first time in club history, the head coach, the general manager, and the team president would all report directly to the chairman and CEO. Hunt hired head coach Andy Reid in 2013, and in eight seasons under Reid, the Chiefs have won 91 regular-season games, which ranks second in the NFL during that span.

Hunt extended the contracts of both Reid and general manager Brett Veach during the 2020 season, solidifying the leadership of the club's football operation for many years to come.

Clark Hunt hoists the Lombardi Trophy on stage following the Chiefs' victory in Super Bowl LIV with his mother, the First Lady of Football, Norma Hunt.

In addition to the on-field resurgence of the team, Hunt is a leading voice among NFL owners. In 2019, he was named chairman of the influential NFL Finance Committee after serving as a member for seven years. Hunt is a member and former chairman of the NFL International Committee, and he also serves on the Management Council's Executive Committee (CEC) and the Personal Conduct Committee. Hunt was instrumental in securing the NFL's collective bargaining agreement in 2011 and was an integral member of the NFL's negotiating team that helped deliver a new collective bargaining agreement with the league's players in 2020, a full season ahead of the deadline.

Hunt graduated first in his class at Southern Methodist University in 1987, earning a degree in business administration with a concentration in finance. He also was a captain and four-year letterman on the Mustangs' nationally ranked soccer team. He received the SMU Distinguished Alumni Award in 2020 for outstanding leadership in philanthropy, business, and civic life, and he currently serves on the SMU Board of Trustees.

He and his wife, Tavia, are actively involved in numerous philanthropic initiatives in both Kansas City and Dallas. One of the Hunt family's lasting legacies is the Chiefs Charity Game, which has raised more than $14.7 million for local youth-focused charities since its inception in 1985.

The Hunts have three children – Gracie, Knobel, and Ava.

KANSAS CITY CHIEFS TEAM OFFICIALS

Clark Hunt
Chairman and CEO

Mark Donovan
President

Brett Veach
General Manager

Mike Borgonzi
Director of Football Operations

Tim Terry
Director of Pro Personnel

Brandt Tilis
Director of Football Administration

Chris Shea
Football Operations Counsel & Personnel Executive

Mike Bradway
Assistant Director of Player Personnel

Ryan Poles
Assistant Director of Player Personnel

Ryne Nutt
Director of College Scouting

Dan Crumb
Chief Financial Officer

Tyler Epp
Executive Vice President of Business Operations

Rick Burkholder
Vice President of Sports Medicine and Performance

Ted Crews
Vice President of Communications

Mike Cukyne
Vice President of Content and Digital Operations

Brandon Hamilton
Vice President of Stadium Operations and Facilities

Kimberly Hobbs
Vice President of Corporate Partnerships and Premium Sales

Matt Kenny
Vice President of Stadium Services and Events

Tyler Kirby
Vice President of Ticketing

Kirsten Krug
Vice President of Administration

Jeffrey Miller
Vice President of Security

Anne Scharf
Vice President of Hunt Family Foundation and Civic Affairs

Allen Wright
Equipment Director

Pat Brazil
Director of Video Operations

Mitch Reynolds
Director of Team Operations

Brian Shafar
Director of Team Security

Kellen Begnoche
Director of Service and Activation

Anthony Cangelosi
Director of Business Development

Nick Capo
Director of Event Operations

Chuck Castellano
Director of Community Outreach

Glenn Connelly
Director of Production

Brad Gee
Director of Football Communications

Kevin Higgins
Director of Information Technology

Stephanie Judah
Director of Chiefs Cheerleaders

Jayne Martin
Director of Fan Experience

Anthony Matthies
Partnerships and Premium Sales Director

Rocco Mazella
Director of Facilities

Michael Ragsdale
Director of Financial Planning and Analysis

Justin Sauser
Director of Ticket Operations

Jeremy Slavens
Director of Events

Gary Spani
Director of Community Engagement

Shaun Tyrance
Team Clinician

AFC CHAMPIONS

ANDY REID Head Coach

Chiefs head coach **ANDY REID** is in his 29th NFL season, 22nd as a head coach, and eighth with the Chiefs. Under Reid, Kansas City has made the playoffs seven times and is on a run of a franchise-record five straight AFC West titles (2016-20).

In 2020, Kansas City posted a franchise-best 14-2 record. The Chiefs made their third consecutive appearance in the AFC Championship Game and are now playing in their second consecutive Super Bowl.

In 2019, Kansas City went 12-4 and Reid brought the Chiefs their first Super Bowl title in 50 years when they rallied to defeat the San Francisco 49ers, 31-20, in Super Bowl LIV.

Reid ranks fifth in NFL annals with 238 career wins and trails only New England's Bill Belichick (311) among active head coaches.

Prior to joining the Chiefs, Reid led the Eagles to a 130-93-1 (.583) regular-season record during his 14 seasons as head coach, which included five trips to the NFC Championship Game and an appearance in Super Bowl XXXIX. He arrived in Philadelphia in 1999 after seven seasons as an assistant coach with the Packers under Mike Holmgren.

A tackle/guard at Brigham Young University from 1979-81, Reid entered the coaching ranks as a graduate assistant at BYU in 1982. He coached at several colleges before moving on to the NFL, the last stop being the University of Missouri (1989-91).

ASSISTANT COACHES

Dave Toub	*Asst. Head Coach/Special Teams Coord.*
Eric Bieniemy	*Offensive Coordinator*
Steve Spagnuolo	*Defensive Coordinator*
Joe Bleymaier	*Pass Game Analyst/Asst. Quarterbacks*
Terry Bradden	*Defensive Quality Control*
Greg Carbin	*Assistant Strength & Conditioning*
Travis Crittenden	*Assistant Strength & Conditioning*
Brendan Daly	*Run Game Coordinator/Defensive Line*
Porter Elliott	*Offensive Quality Control*
Connor Embree	*Defensive Assistant*
Mike Frazier	*Statistical Analysis Coordinator*
David Girardi	*Offensive Quality Control*
Andy Heck	*Offensive Line*
Andy Hill	*Assistant Special Teams*
Matt House	*Linebackers*
Mike Kafka	*Quarterbacks/Pass Game Coordinator*
Greg Lewis	*Wide Receivers*
Sam Madison	*Defensive Backs/Cornerbacks*
Corey Matthael	*Assistant Offensive Line*
Deland McCullough	*Running Backs*
Tom Melvin	*Tight Ends*
Dave Merritt	*Defensive Backs*
Britt Reid	*Linebackers/Outside Linebackers*
Ryan Reynolds	*Assistant Strength & Conditioning/Sport Science*
Barry Rubin	*Head Strength & Conditioning*
Alex Whittingham	*Defensive Quality Control*
Dan Williams	*Assistant to the Head Coach*

KANSAS CITY CHIEFS ALPHABETICAL ROSTER

NO	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	BIRTH DATE	NFL EXP	COLLEGE	HOW ACQUIRED
73	Allegretti, Nick	G	6-4	320	4/21/96	2	Illinois	D7 '19
26	Bell, Le'Veon	RB	6-1	225	2/18/92	7	Michigan State	FA '20
21	Breeland, Bashaud	CB	5-11	195	1/30/92	7	Clemson	UFA '19
7	Butker, Harrison	K	6-4	205	7/14/95	4	Georgia Tech	FA '17
55	Clark, Frank	DE	6-3	260	6/17/93	6	Michigan	T(Sea) '19
51	Danna, Mike	DE	6-2	261	12/1/97	R	Michigan	D5 '20
79	Durant, Yasir	OL	6-7	330	5/21/98	R	Missouri	CFA '20
25	Edwards-Helaire, Clyde	RB	5-8	209	4/11/99	R	LSU	D1 '20
27	Fenton, Rashad	CB	5-11	188	2/17/97	2	South Carolina	D6a '19
72	Fisher, Eric	T	6-7	315	1/5/91	8	Central Michigan	D1 '13
50	Gay, Willie	LB	6-1	243	2/15/98	R	Mississippi State	D2 '20
20	Hamilton, Antonio	CB	6-0	195	1/24/93	5	South Carolina State	FA '20
17	Hardman, Mecole	WR	5-10	187	3/12/98	2	Georgia	D2a '19
47	Harris, Darius	LB	6-2	238	1/17/96	1	Middle Tennessee St.	CFA '19
4	Henne, Chad	QB	6-3	222	7/2/85	13	Michigan	UFA '18
10	Hill, Tyreek	WR	5-10	185	3/1/94	5	West Alabama	D5b '16
53	Hitchens, Anthony	LB	6-0	235	6/10/92	7	Iowa	UFA '18
95	Jones, Chris	DT	6-6	310	7/3/94	5	Mississippi State	D2 '16
48	Keizer, Nick	TE	6-4	251	5/2/95	1	Grand Valley State	FA '19
87	Kelce, Travis	TE	6-5	260	10/5/89	8	Cincinnati	D3a '13
29	Keyes, BoPete	CB	6-1	200	11/9/97	R	Tulane	D7 '20
67	Kilgore, Daniel	C	6-3	291	12/18/87	10	Appalachian State	FA '20
92	Kpassagnon, Tanoh	DE	6-7	289	6/14/94	4	Villanova	D2 '17
15	Mahomes, Patrick	QB	6-3	230	9/17/95	4	Texas Tech	D1 '17
32	Mathieu, Tyrann	S	5-9	190	5/13/92	8	LSU	UFA '19
56	Niemann, Ben	LB	6-2	235	7/27/95	3	Iowa	CFA '18
91	Nnadi, Derrick	DT	6-1	312	5/9/96	3	Florida State	D3 '18
44	O'Daniel, Dorian	LB	6-1	220	9/4/94	3	Clemson	D3b '18
57	Okafor, Alex	DE	6-4	261	2/8/91	8	Texas	UFA '19
64	Pennel, Mike	DT	6-4	330	5/9/91	7	Colorado State-Pueblo	FA '19
13	Pringle, Byron	WR	6-1	203	11/17/93	3	Kansas State	CFA '18
74	Rankin, Martinas	T	6-5	311	10/20/94	3	Mississippi State	T(Hou) '19
62	Reiter, Austin	C	6-3	300	11/27/91	5	South Florida	W(Cle) '18
75	Remmers, Mike	T	6-5	308	4/11/89	8	Oregon State	FA '20
11	Robinson, Demarcus	WR	6-1	203	9/21/94	5	Florida	D4c '16
99	Saunders, Khalen	DT	6-0	324	8/9/96	2	Western Illinois	D3 '19
83	Seals-Jones, Ricky	TE	6-5	243	3/15/95	4	Texas A&M	FA '20
42	Sherman, Anthony	FB	5-10	242	12/11/88	10	Connecticut	T(Ari) '13
38	Sneed, L'Jarius	CB	6-1	193	1/21/97	R	Louisiana Tech	D4 '20
49	Sorensen, Daniel	S	6-2	208	3/5/90	7	BYU	CFA '14
34	Thompson, Darwin	RB	5-8	200	2/12/97	2	Utah State	D6b '19
22	Thornhill, Juan	S	6-0	205	10/19/95	2	Virginia	D2b '19
5	Townsend, Tommy	P	6-1	191	11/12/96	R	Florida	CFA '20
35	Ward, Charvarius	CB	6-1	198	5/16/96	3	Middle Tennessee St.	T(Dal) '18
90	Ward, Tim	DE	6-6	255	8/11/97	1	Old Dominion	CFA '19
14	Watkins, Sammy	WR	6-1	211	6/14/93	7	Clemson	UFA '18
23	Watts, Armani	S	5-11	205	3/19/96	3	Texas A&M	D4 '18
98	Wharton, Tershawn	DT	6-4	255	6/25/98	R	Missouri S&T	CFA '20
31	Williams, Darrel	RB	5-11	224	4/15/95	3	LSU	CFA '18
54	Wilson, Damien	LB	6-0	245	5/28/93	6	Minnesota	UFA '19
41	Winchester, James	LS	6-3	240	8/6/89	6	Oklahoma	FA '15
61	Wisniewski, Stefen	G	6-3	305	3/22/89	10	Penn State	FA '20
77	Wylie, Andrew	G	6-6	309	8/19/94	3	Eastern Michigan	FA '17

KANSAS CITY CHIEFS

Nick Allegretti (73)
Guard

Le'Veon Bell (26)
Running Back

Bashaud Breeland (21)
Cornerback

Harrison Butker (7)
Kicker

Frank Clark (55)
Defensive End

Mike Danna (51)
Defensive End

Yasir Durant (79)
Offensive Lineman

Clyde Edwards-Helaire (25)
Running Back

Rashad Fenton (27)
Cornerback

Eric Fisher (72)
Tackle

Willie Gay (50)
Linebacker

Antonio Hamilton (20)
Cornerback

Mecole Hardman (17)
Wide Receiver

Darius Harris (47)
Linebacker

Chad Henne (4)
Quarterback

Tyreek Hill (10)
Wide Receiver

Anthony Hitchens (53)
Linebacker

Chris Jones (95)
Defensive Tackle

Nick Keizer (48)
Tight End

Travis Kelce (87)
Tight End

BoPete Keyes (29)
Cornerback

Daniel Kilgore (67)
Center

Tanoh Kpassagnon (92)
Defensive End

Patrick Mahomes (15)
Quarterback

Tyrann Mathieu (32)
Safety

Ben Niemann (56)
Linebacker

Derrick Nnadi (91)
Defensive Tackle

KANSAS CITY CHIEFS

Dorian O'Daniel (44)
Linebacker

Alex Okafor (57)
Defensive End

Mike Pennel (64)
Defensive Tackle

Byron Pringle (13)
Wide Receiver

Martinas Rankin (74)
Tackle

Austin Reiter (62)
Center

Mike Remmers (75)
Tackle

Demarcus Robinson (11)
Wide Receiver

Khalen Saunders (99)
Defensive Tackle

Ricky Seals-Jones (83)
Tight End

Anthony Sherman (42)
Fullback

L'Jarius Sneed (38)
Cornerback

Daniel Sorensen (49)
Safety

Darwin Thompson (34)
Running Back

Juan Thornhill (22)
Safety

Tommy Townsend (5)
Punter

Charvarius Ward (35)
Cornerback

Tim Ward (90)
Defensive End

Sammy Watkins (14)
Wide Receiver

Armani Watts (23)
Safety

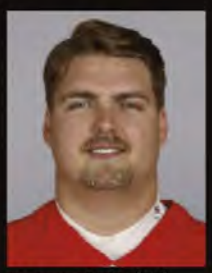
Tershawn Wharton (98)
Defensive Tackle

Darrel Williams (31)
Running Back

Damien Wilson (54)
Linebacker

James Winchester (41)
Long Snapper

Stefen Wisniewski (61)
Guard



Andrew Wylie (77)
Guard

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METTLE TO MEDAL

RESILIENCE DEFINES NFL TEAMS THAT WERE DOWN, BUT NEVER OUT, IN THEIR QUEST FOR A CHAMPIONSHIP. BY TOM PELISSERO

Patrick Mahomes made the suggestion on the sideline, then relayed to teammates what would quickly become one of the most iconic play calls in Super Bowl history.

"There are some keywords that you clue in to as a tackle," Kansas City Chiefs right tackle Mitchell Schwartz recalls of that moment in Super Bowl LIV. "'Wasp' was one of those terms we know is a long route."

The Chiefs had rallied before – from a 24-0 deficit to beat Houston in the divisional round, from 10 points down to defeat Tennessee in the AFC title game, from a knee injury that sidelined Mahomes for two games at midseason.

But when Mahomes posed the question to offensive coordinator Eric Bieniemy – "Do we have time to run 'Wasp?'" – the Chiefs' star quarterback admitted afterward, "We were in a bad situation, especially with that pass rush."

Trailing 20-10. A little over seven minutes to go. Facing third-and-15 from their own 35-yard line against a San Francisco 49ers defense that had wreaked havoc up front throughout their Super Bowl showdown.

Tyreek Hill's 44-yard catch in the fourth quarter of Super Bowl LIV swung momentum to the Chiefs in what became a 31-20 win over San Francisco.

Scott Boehm/AP Images

Above: Lions quarterback Bobby Layne (left), who was sidelined with a broken ankle, hugs QB Tobin Rote after Detroit's win in the 1957 Western Conference playoff. **Right:** Jim Plunkett survived a rocky start to the 1980 season to steer the Raiders to the Super Bowl XV title.

Mahomes drifted deep into the pocket to help buy time for wide receiver Tyreek Hill to use a double move to break free from zone coverage. Niners lineman DeForest Buckner was a split-second late with his hit on Mahomes, who heaved one deep to Hill for a 44-yard gain.

Four plays later, Mahomes found tight end Travis Kelce for a 1-yard score – one of three fourth-quarter TDs for Kansas City, which pulled out a 31-20 win and captured the Lombardi Trophy for the first time in 50 years.

The 2019 Chiefs weren't the first NFL champion to rescue their title dreams from the brink of destruction – during the regular season, the playoffs, or the Super Bowl itself. They're just the latest.

LIONS' LATE ROAR

It was halftime of the 1957 Western Conference playoff game in San Francisco, and tickets for the 49ers' anticipated NFL championship showdown with Cleveland had already been printed as the Detroit Lions entered their locker room down, 24-7.

"Everybody realized the mistakes we made," recalls Joe Schmidt, the Lions' linebacker and team captain. "I got up and told them: 'Don't hang your head. If we don't get our ass going here, we're gonna be on the plane and everyone can go back home.'"

The Lions had dealt with adversity that season, including the loss of star quarterback Bobby Layne to a broken and dislocated ankle two weeks earlier.

Their deficit expanded to 27-7 after Hugh McElhenny's 71-yard run set up a 49ers field goal early in the second half. But then the Lions' depleted offense came alive, with Tom "The Bomb" Tracy running for two TDs and Layne's replacement, Tobin Rote, orchestrating a touchdown drive capped by Gene Gedman's 2-yard run. Jim Martin's fourth PAT of the day gave Detroit the lead.

Schmidt and the Lions' defense generated four turnovers over the final 15 minutes to help seal the 31-27 victory. The next week, a 59-14 blowout of the Browns earned the Lions their third NFL title of the decade.

"We had people make big plays," Schmidt says. "The 49ers started playing conservative instead of going out and going after us again. If they would've been more aggressive and controlled the ball, we would've gone home and sucked our thumb."

RAIDERS' RESURGENCE

The Oakland Raiders fell to 2-3 to start the 1980 season with a 31-17 loss to the Chiefs – a game in which quarterback Dan Pastorini broke his leg and replacement Jim Plunkett, a onetime No. 1 pick, threw five interceptions.

"That was a very gloomy Monday morning, because [Plunkett] didn't come in and tear it up real well – but neither did the rest of the team," recalls Tom Flores, who was in his second year as the Raiders' head coach after seven seasons (and a Super Bowl win) on John Madden's staff. "We let Kansas City beat us up. That wasn't like us."

Plunkett was in good enough shape physically that Flores recommended his signing as the third-string QB in 1978.

"But we didn't know where the rest of him was," Flores says, in terms of competitive nature, mindset, and stamina after seven seasons getting knocked around in New England and San

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Francisco. No one could predict how Plunkett would react to such a poor return to action.

Amid rumors that owner Al Davis might fire him, Flores considered starting rookie first-round pick Marc Wilson, who they'd drafted after trading franchise legend Ken Stabler to the Houston Oilers for Pastorini. But Flores stuck with Plunkett, reinforcing his message to players that Monday morning: "We're not doing anything wrong. We've got to do it better. We've got to practice better. We know how to win."

The next week, the Raiders outgunned the San Diego Chargers, 38-24 – the first of six consecutive wins that propelled them to a wild card spot in the playoffs, where they beat Stabler and the Oilers, the Browns, and the Chargers again before routing the Philadelphia Eagles, 27-10, in Super Bowl XV.

Lester Hayes led a resurgent defense with five postseason interceptions. And Plunkett, who'd taken eight sacks in a Week 12 loss at Philadelphia, capped his own turnaround by throwing three touchdowns in the rematch.

49ERS COME TOGETHER

In 1988, Steve Young wasn't Steve Young yet.

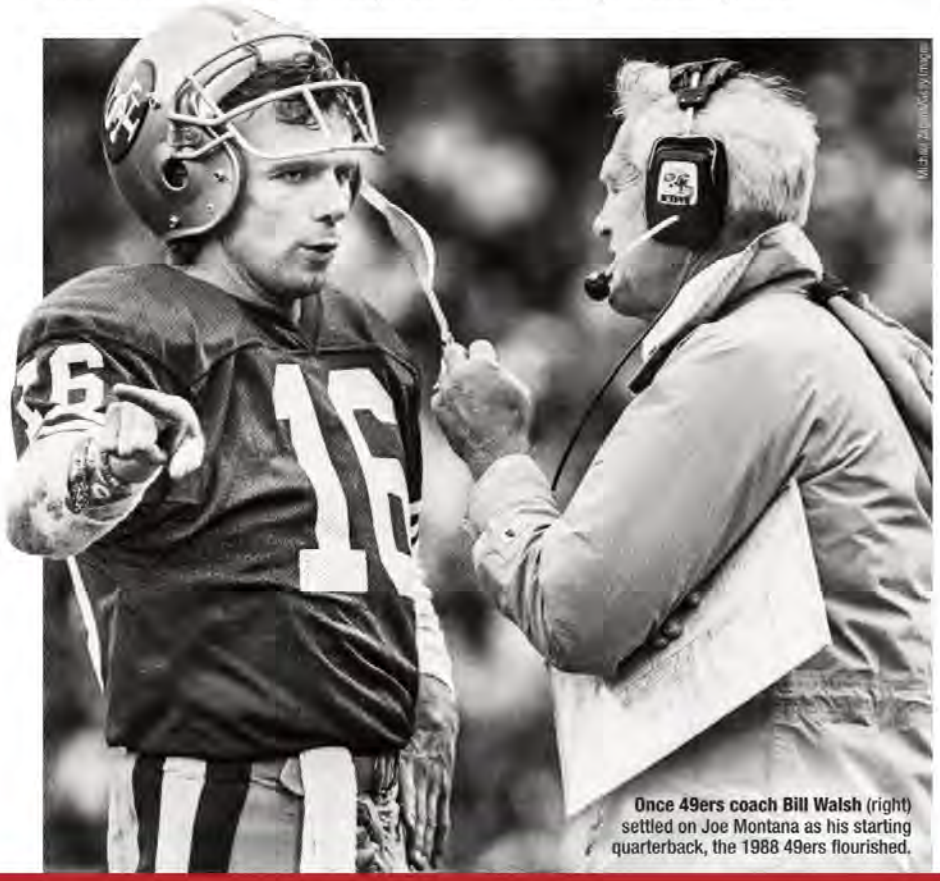
He was still the backup to 49ers legend Joe Montana, who'd already won two Super Bowls. But head coach Bill Walsh had given his other future Hall of Famer a look in a stunning playoff loss to Minnesota the previous January, setting the stage for a quarterback competition that lasted well into preseason. And Walsh continued to shuffle his QBs during the regular season, unsettling a strong locker room.

"A lot of distractions, a lot of animosity, a lot of issues, and the reason why is, the team was already divided coming into training camp," safety Ronnie Lott recalls. "You had one group of guys who thought that Joe needed to start. You had another group of guys feeling that Steve needed to start. You had dissension that didn't have anything to do with playing football."

It came to a head after a 9-3 home loss to the Raiders dropped San Francisco to 6-5.

Players called a team meeting in which Lott told them: "'If somebody's going to kick your butt, man, beat me at my best.' A lot of teams were beating us and we hadn't given our all."

Walsh stuck with Montana, who admitted he'd been looking over his shoulder at times while playing through back, elbow, and rib injuries, as well as a form of dysentery that caused him to lose 11 pounds. Suddenly, Joe started to be like Joe again, leading the 49ers on a four-game winning streak.



Once 49ers coach Bill Walsh (right) settled on Joe Montana as his starting quarterback, the 1988 49ers flourished.

In the playoffs, they avenged their loss to the Vikings with a 34-9 rout and pasted the Bears, 28-3, in frigid Chicago to reach Super Bowl XXIII, where Montana delivered one of his signature moments: a 92-yard game-winning drive, capped by a TD pass to John Taylor with 34 seconds to go, to beat the Cincinnati Bengals.

"All of a sudden, [Montana] got locked," Lott says. "When you get him focused on playing for other people, it's hard to put your money on anyone else."

COLTS SLAY THE DRAGON

The 2006 Indianapolis Colts had just made what head coach Tony Dungy felt was the biggest play of the AFC Championship Game – a third-and-10 conversion from Peyton Manning to Reggie Wayne deep in their own territory, leading to a field goal that cut the Patriots' lead to 21-6 before halftime.

"There's TV monitors in the tunnel, and they're on," Dungy recalls, "and I hear [CBS'] James Brown on the halftime show say, 'No team has ever come back from more than a 10-point deficit in a championship game.' I'm thinking, 'Why did they have to say that when we were walking in?' It's like everything's against us."

The Patriots had been the Colts' playoff nemesis, eliminating them two of the previous three seasons in Foxborough. Manning was a superstar, but had yet to win the big one.

Finally, the Colts were on their own turf. They'd improved on defense since star safety Bob Sanders' return late in the season. The night before the game, soft-spoken center Jeff Saturday fired up his teammates with a rare speech that recalled the U.S. Olympic men's hockey team's Miracle on Ice: "This is our time."

Dungy went up and down the sideline after a pick-six pushed the Patriots' lead to 21-3, promising players it was still their time. At halftime, he told them: "We don't have to win this game in five minutes. But the biggest thing is going to be this first drive."

Manning delivered: a 14-play, 76-yard march capped by a 1-yard TD on a sneak, bringing the crowd to life. The Colts tied it at 21 on their next drive. But they didn't take their first lead until Joseph Addai's 3-yard touchdown run with one minute to go in the game. Marlin Jackson then intercepted Brady with 18 seconds left to seal the 38-34 win, and the Colts rolled Chicago, 29-17, in Super Bowl XLI.

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One of the turning point plays in Super Bowl LI came when linebacker Dont'a Hightower strip-sacked Atlanta's Matt Ryan, setting up a Patriots touchdown.

"That team wasn't our most talented," Dungy says, "but it was the team that had resilience and stayed together."

PATRIOTS PULL OFF A MIRACLE

The Patriots had already won four rings in the Bill Belichick-Tom Brady era, but no team had ever overcome a deficit like this in the Super Bowl: New England trailed the Atlanta Falcons, 28-3, midway through the third quarter of Super Bowl LI.

A still-determined Brady stalked the sideline, imploring teammates to play harder and tougher.

"And I never once looked at them on the sideline and thought, 'This is going to be hard to get them to do anything now,'" former Patriots offensive line coach Dante Scarnecchia recalls. "Because you just didn't see it in their faces, their eyes, and their posture. These guys are still in it – let's just see what happens."

Two plays defined the greatest comeback in Super Bowl history: Dont'a Hightower's strip-sack on Matt Ryan as the Falcons tried to throw deep on third-and-1 with 8:31 to go, setting up a Patriots score that cut the deficit to eight; and Julian Edelman somehow keeping a batted pass off the turf for a 23-yard reception on New England's next possession, leading to a touchdown and game-tying two-point conversion in the final minute of regulation.

By the time the 34-28 overtime victory was complete, Brady had thrown 62 times for 466 yards, as the Patriots approached every down like third down, isolating the Falcons' overmatched defensive backs with routes designed to beat man coverage and letting their legendary quarterback dissect.

"He's always been in a comfort zone with that," Scarnecchia says, "because he sets the protections, he knows where the problems are, he knows who's open, he knows what they're doing, and he knows how they're doing it. So it became a very easy game for him."

As the confetti fell and cameras rolled afterward, Belichick told Edelman: "They counted us out 20 times."

Replied Edelman: "You've gotta believe, Coach."

__Tom Pelissero__ is a reporter for NFL Network. He has covered the NFL since 2003.

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UNLIKE ANY OTHER

FROM EXTREME SECURITY MEASURES TO A DAZZLING ANTHEM, AND ALL THE WAY TO ITS STUNNING CONCLUSION, SUPER BOWL XXV WAS ONE FOR THE AGES.

BY KIMBERLY JONES

For Buffalo Bills quarterback Jim Kelly, the day of Super Bowl XXV started as most of his playing days did – with a walk onto the pregame field alongside teammate Steve Tasker, a special teams standout.

But this stroll, of course, was different.

As Tasker would say years later, "You could literally feel the attention of the world."

Super Bowl XXV was played at Tampa Stadium just days after the start of the first Gulf War. Emotions were running high, security was significantly heightened, and spectators waved tiny American flags to Whitney Houston's stirring rendition of the national anthem.

That Sunday – Jan. 27, 1991 – played out like a movie script. Bills wide receiver Andre Reed, a future Hall of Famer, said reality set in when he saw armed soldiers stationed at the top of the stadium.

On the field, the Bills were favored by a touchdown over the New York Giants. The main attraction: the big-play Bills offense vs. the stingy New York Giants defense.

Buffalo had Kelly, a five-time Pro Bowl selection who earned his bust in Canton in 2002. The Giants, though, had lost their starting QB, Phil Simms, to a broken foot suffered in Week 15 against the Bills. Backup Jeff Hostetler would have to continue to be good enough.

The Giants were trying to win their second Super Bowl in five years. The Bills were playing in their first Super Bowl; ultimately, they'd go on to make four consecutive appearances, something no other team has accomplished.

But there is a reason Bills coach Marv Levy, in later years, would call Super Bowl XXV the most disappointing loss of his career. How could he not?

The second-to-last snap of the game decided everything: A field goal attempt from 47 yards that spawned a two-word description, at once encapsulating feelings of unbridled joy and complete despair.

Wide right.

The Giants and Bills put on a Super Bowl show that – three decades later – still ranks among the most memorable in the game's history. But first, they had to get there.

Bill Parcells, a great NFL coach by any measure, had a well-earned reputation as a master motivator. His 1990 Giants had navigated the late-season loss of Simms to finish the regular season 13-3. Their win in the Divisional round of the playoffs, 31-13 over the Chicago Bears, was never close.

Next up was the NFC Championship Game against the two-time defending Super Bowl champion San Francisco 49ers. Parcells knew it wouldn't be easy, but if his Giants prevailed, they would fly directly to Tampa for the Super Bowl. There was no bye week after the championship games that year.

Before the Giants left for the West Coast, Parcells walked into the team's locker room, threw a suitcase on the floor, and barked that he was packing for two games, not one.

"And if anyone isn't packing for two games, you might as well stay home," he told his players.

Over the years, linebacker Carl Banks enjoyed telling that story because, he said, it was vintage Parcells: With his unique style, a clear message was delivered.

On gameday, Parcells' defense made the difference. Defensive end Leonard Marshall knocked Joe Montana, the future Hall of Fame quarterback, out of the game early in the fourth quarter, and Matt Bahr's fifth field goal of the day, a 42-yarder as time expired, provided the winning points. Giants 15, 49ers 13.

The Bills, meanwhile, coasted through the playoffs. The AFC Divisional round featured a spectacular quarterback matchup, Kelly vs. Dan Marino, but Buffalo never trailed and prevailed amid snowflakes, 44-34, at Rich Stadium.

The AFC title game? No contest: Bills 51, Los Angeles Raiders 3.

The teams were set. The stakes were high.

From on the field to atop the stadium, Super Bowl XXV was a unique affair. The Giants' Ottis Anderson (top left) rushed for 102 yards and scored a touchdown to earn MVP honors. Security officials (top right) were stationed across Tampa Stadium to ensure fans' safety. Thurman Thomas (bottom) had a 31-yard TD run to give the Bills a fourth-quarter lead.

Leading up to the Super Bowl, there were whispers that the game could be delayed or even canceled. The NFL quickly dispatched those rumors. The game would be played as scheduled. It was just going to be different from anything sports fans had seen before.

Black Hawk helicopters patrolled the skies. The Goodyear blimp was grounded. Concrete bunkers were built in the parking lot. Trained canines roamed with their handlers. Every vehicle coming into the stadium was checked for bombs. Ushers waved metal detectors as fans entered the grounds.

And those trained armed soldiers remained on the roof until game's end.

The overall effort included more than 500 security officials from the U.S. Army and Coast Guard, the FBI, the Tampa police, and more than a dozen other agencies.

That day, the NFL took every precaution in order to hold its championship game. The result was not only a remarkable day in United States history, but a football game with incomparable theater.

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In the Super Bowl's 54-year history, the Giants' 20-19 win over Buffalo in Super Bowl XXV remains the only one to be decided by a single point.

captivated the Tampa Stadium crowd and the nation. At 27, she was already the first artist in history to have seven consecutive singles go to No. 1 on Billboard's Hot 100 pop chart. Ultimately, the anthem became the last top-10 hit of her career.

Backed by the Florida Orchestra, Houston's singing was prerecorded in Los Angeles – reportedly in one take. On the field, she sang into a dead microphone, yet none of that detracted from the performance.

In an ESPN/NFL Films documentary in 2015, Bills running back Thurman Thomas said he remembered the anthem "probably more than anything that happened throughout the game."

Houston's anthem is universally regarded as the best rendition ever. In that moment, it was perfect. A flyover of F-16 jets from the 56th Tactical Training Wing at MacDill Air Force Base followed.

Everyone in the stadium had goose bumps.

Super Bowl XXV was a nip-and-tuck affair. Neither team ever led by more than one score. It was physical, too. Bills linebacker Shane Conlan broke his facemask while tackling running back Ottis Anderson in the first half.

While Anderson became the game's MVP (21 carries, 102 yards, 1 TD), his Bills counterpart represented a different challenge for the Giants' defense. Defensive coordinator Bill Belichick convinced his players that allowing Thomas to rush for 100 yards (he would finish with 131) was a winning strategy.

"What the hell are you talking about?" Banks wondered.

Belichick's rationale: If the Bills had success with the run, they'd stick with it. And that was far preferable to having Kelly throw the ball 45 times.

The Giants' defenders bought into the Belichick genius, and his game plan from that day has a rightful place in the Pro Football Hall of Fame, awaiting the arrival someday of the coach himself.

Midway through the fourth quarter, the Bills led, 19-17, before the Giants moved ahead on a Bahr field goal. With 2:16 to play, the Bills took possession at their own 10-yard line, and over the next eight plays, they marched to the Giants 29. Fourth down. Eight seconds on the clock.

Facing the south end of the stadium, Scott Norwood lined up to attempt a 47-yard field goal. It started right... and stayed there.

"[The kick] wasn't moving, it wasn't being drawn in," said Norwood, whose seven-year NFL career included First Team All-Pro honors in 1988.

Thomas, though, looked deeper than the disappointing final seconds.

"The game didn't come down to that missed kick; there were so many missed opportunities before that, so many times we could have clinched it," he wrote in the book *Super Bowl Gold*.

The Giants were Super Bowl champions. The Bills were crushed; they went on to lose the next three Super Bowls.

Yet leave it to Kelly to find the silver lining. As he told the *Democrat & Chronicle* (Rochester, N.Y.) in recent years, "I think about 11 years (with the Bills). I don't think about four games. If you want to sit in your rocking chair when you get old, think about what could have been, then you're crazy. I think about the great things that happened, the friends I had, and the fun times I had. I was just happy to do what we did."

On its 30th anniversary, Super Bowl XXV remains one for the ages, thanks to two evenly matched teams that were ultimately separated by two words.

Wide right.

Kim Jones *is a lifelong football fan, a reporter at NFL Network, and hosts sports talk radio shows at WFAN-FM in New York City.*

In its 26 years as owners of the Buccaneers, the Glazer family has committed itself to uplifting the Bay area community. Pictured (from left): Darcie Glazer Kassewitz, Joel Glazer, Edward Glazer, Kevin Glazer, Bryan Glazer, and Avram Glazer.

BELIEVING IN THE BUCS

Tampa Bay Buccaneers

SINCE PURCHASING THE BUCCANEERS IN 1995, THE GLAZER FAMILY HAS BEEN PASSIONATE ABOUT WINNING FOOTBALL GAMES AND BUILDING A STRONGER TAMPA BAY COMMUNITY. BY SCOTT SMITH

JOEL GLAZER STILL REMEMBERS

watching his father put on the baseball cap emblazoned with its giant orange "TB" after the press conference to introduce Malcolm Glazer as the new owner of the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. The Bay area didn't yet know much about the Glazer family on that January day in 1995, but Joel already knew what his father planned to bring to the team, to the NFL, and to the community.

"We all knew why he wanted the team, and we all believed in the same goals," Joel says. "First and foremost, he wanted to win. The Buccaneers hadn't done much of that for some time, but we knew there was a deep passion for football here, and he knew how important it was to give back to our home in the Tampa Bay area. Since then, we have strived to make a very positive impact on the community. I think we've done that, but there's always more to do."

Indeed, revitalizing the team immediately became a family affair for Malcolm, his wife, Linda, and their six children: Avram, Kevin, Bryan, Joel, Edward, and Darcie. Pretty soon, it also turned into a love affair for the Glazer family with the Bay area community.

After 26 years, the feeling is mutual.

"The Glazer family has always been a cornerstone of this community," Tampa Mayor Jane Castor says. "Whether it's providing eyeglasses for those in need, turfing our Tampa Parks & Recreation fields, or generously helping uplift the city with their commitment to social justice, the Glazer family exemplifies what is so incredible about the Tampa Bay region. We look forward to rolling out the red carpet for Super Bowl LV and appreciate the opportunity to host everyone in our great city."

The Glazer family has had active and influential roles both at the league level and in the community. Joel is the Chairman of the International Committee and also serves on the Finance Committee, the Media Committee, and the Legalized Sports Betting Committee; Bryan is currently on the NFL's Media O&O Committee; and both Bryan and Darcie

Above: Malcolm Glazer accepts the Lombardi Trophy after the Buccaneers' Super Bowl XXXVII win. Top right: Glazer (center) was joined by sons Joel (left) and Bryan (right) at their 1995 introductory press conference. Bottom right: The Glazer Children's Museum opened in 2010 with 53,000 square feet of space for learning and play.

Kassewitz are on the Host Committee for Super Bowl LV.

The entire family continues to share one of the strongest NFL passions held by Malcolm Glazer, who passed away in 2014: Bringing the Super Bowl to the Bay area. Super Bowl LV will mark the fourth Super Bowl to be played in Tampa, and the third since the Glazers' tireless efforts to get Raymond James Stadium built in 1998. The league's biggest spotlight shined on Tampa in January 2001 and February 2009.

"We believe the Tampa Bay area is the perfect location for the biggest event in sports, and we love the attention the Super Bowl brings to our great community," Bryan says. "The impact that these Super Bowls have had on our area is significant and lasting. As for the game itself, there isn't a better venue than Raymond James Stadium, which is one of the most iconic stadiums in the country. The comprehensive enhancements we've made to the stadium over the past three years were not only designed to give our fans a greater gameday experience, but to make Super Bowl LV an unforgettable show."

The Glazers didn't just pursue Super Bowls for Tampa, but for the Buccaneers as a team. They stalked upgrades in every facet of the franchise, without compromise, all with the goal of joining the league's elite. Changes came at a breakneck speed for the team – a new coach in Tony Dungy in 1996, new uniforms and color scheme in 1997, a new stadium in 1998, and a string of playoff appearances that ended with a Super Bowl championship. When the Buccaneers finished off their magical run with a 48-21 win over Oakland in Super Bowl XXXVII, it was a dream come true for Malcolm Glazer. It was a dream the entire family worked hard to make into a reality along with the talented people they hired to build a winner.

"The number one thing I can tell you about winning a Super Bowl is that it makes you want to win five more," Edward says. "We were so proud of the players and the coaches, and everyone who contributed to that incredible season, that night in San Diego. I was so happy for my father, who wanted that Super Bowl win more than anything and told everybody in the Bay area back in 1995 that this team was going to get to the top. We will never stop chasing championships for this team and this community."

Whatever the results on the field, the Glazers are unwavering in their efforts to be a source of strength for the Bay area community and to seek out new ways to improve youth development, racial equality, workforce development, and much more. The team's most recent creation is its Social Justice Initiative, which is directed by a panel of players and supports organizations in the area that drive social change. The Glazer family kicked off the initiative with a $1 million commitment.

"We want to break down barriers and bring people together," Darcie says. "We want to help empower our players so that they can affect the changes in the community that they think are important. We want to give back to this great community that has been so good to us, and we want to uplift people. We're listening, and we're seeking solutions to the problems that matter to all of us in this organization."

The Glazer family has given back in ways big and small over the past quarter century, and some of the most prominent additions to the Bay area landscape and way of life are the Glazer Children's Museum, the Glazer Vision Foundation, and, most recently, sizeable donations to provide meals to those in need during the COVID-19 pandemic. The museum opened in 2010 in downtown Tampa to rave reviews and has become a top educational destination for parents and schools. The Vision Foundation continues to battle an issue that was near to Malcolm Glazer's heart, as it seeks to make sure no young students are held back by problems with their eyesight.

Just as there are always more championships to chase, there is always more work to do in the community, and the Glazer family is just getting started in its efforts to build, support, and foster meaningful change in the Bay area.

It's been a wonderful 26 years; there is so much more to come.

***Scott Smith** has worked in the NFL for 31 years and is currently the senior writer/editor for the Tampa Bay Buccaneers.*

Photos by Tampa Bay Buccaneers

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BETTER TOGETHER

MERGER

SETTING ASIDE A BITTER RIVALRY, THE 1970 AFL-NFL MERGER PROVED A MASTER STROKE THAT HELPED PRO FOOTBALL FLOURISH. BY CHAREAN WILLIAMS

THE NFL CLAIMS 27 OF THE TOP 50 SPOTS ON FORBES' LIST OF THE WORLD'S MOST VALUABLE SPORTS FRANCHISES (with the Dallas Cowboys ranked No. 1 for the fifth consecutive year). NFL stadiums drew 17.21 million fans last season. Forty-seven of the top-50 rated television programs in 2019 were NFL games, and the league's U.S. TV rights are worth an average of $6.5 billion per year. Even with COVID-19 putting an asterisk on attendance in 2020, all the other key metrics – ratings, dollars, fan interest, media coverage, etc. – continue to soar.

As the NFL closes out its 101st season, it's important to remember the league would never have arrived here without one critically important development: It was 50 years ago that the NFL and what had been the American Football League completed their first season together.

"It was one of the classic mergers of all time, because it led to unparalleled success for the NFL," Hall of Famer Gil Brandt, the vice president of player personnel for the Cowboys from 1960-1989, says.

Neither side was united in wanting such a union, but Kansas City Chiefs owner Lamar Hunt and Cowboys president Tex Schramm, who were Dallas neighbors if not friends, hammered out a deal that was best for the future of the sport.

"There is no question it was huge," says Pittsburgh Steelers owner Art Rooney II, whose father, Dan, was the team's general manager and running day-to-day operations at the time of the merger. "It wouldn't have been good for either side to continue the competition. It pushed the NFL as a truly national league with teams in the right cities and with very competitive owners in charge of the franchises.

Malcolm Emmons/USA TODAY Sports

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"It was the right thing to do, and I give Commissioner Pete Rozelle a lot of credit for helping make it happen. He was a visionary and somebody who was able to help people see the right side of things. It was probably the biggest thing that ever happened to the league."

The AFL was born of frustration in July 1959 after Hunt and Bud Adams, who would own the Houston Oilers, each failed in a bid to buy controlling interest of the NFL's Chicago Cardinals and then-NFL Commissioner Bert Bell rejected their proposal for expansion.

While the owners of the eight original AFL franchises were nicknamed "The Foolish Club" by Oakland Raiders co-owner Wayne Valley, what they quickly became was a pain in the wallets of NFL owners.

The new league assured its long-term stability with a generous contract from ABC, the first revenue-sharing plan in sports, and an offensive-oriented style of play. In its first year, the AFL signed half of the NFL's first-round draft choices, among them running back Billy Cannon, the 1959 Heisman Trophy winner. Cannon inked a $100,000 deal with the Oilers, despite having already accepted a $50,000 contract with the NFL's Los Angeles Rams.

If Cannon gave the AFL instant credibility, Joe Namath gave it swagger and a face to market when he signed with the New York Jets in 1965. After the St. Louis Cardinals took the University of Alabama quarterback with the 12th overall selection in the NFL Draft, Namath asked for a new Lincoln Continental and a then-record $200,000 contract. What he really wanted was to go to a big-market team.

Adams found that out after each AFL owner wrote the name of a great college player on a piece of paper, put the names in a hat, and vowed to make every effort to sign all of them. He drew Namath, who rebuffed the Oilers by explaining he wanted to play in the "bright lights." So Adams traded the QB's rights to the Jets, who inked him to a three-year, $427,000 deal, a record at the time. The move might have saved the Jets – as well as the AFL.

"They wore fur coats before me, you see," says Namath, who credits then-Alabama coach Bear Bryant with advising him. "But being in New York, that was the media center. That was a part of it, big time, too. Lady luck smiled on me, putting me in the right situation."

By that point, the rivalry between the leagues had devolved into a bitter battle with lawsuits, bidding wars, and angry words.

David F. Smith/AP Images

Robert Riger/Getty Images

Among the AFL's key signings were Billy Cannon (above) and Joe Namath (top right), who both brought star power to the fledgling league. Right: Cowboys president Tex Schramm (left), NFL Commissioner Pete Rozelle (center), and Chiefs owner Lamar Hunt announce the AFL-NFL merger on June 8, 1966.

John Duricks/AP Images

"The relationship between the NFL owners and the AFL owners in some respects was like the 20th-century version of a Hatfield and McCoy feud," Joe Browne, the all-time longest-serving employee in the NFL office, says. "The NFL owners didn't really respect all of the AFL owners. They treated them like Johnny-come-lately, because the AFL owners had cost the NFL a great deal of money by signing rookies to large, extraordinary contracts."

With player salaries skyrocketing, Schramm – with the blessing of Rozelle – secretly invited Hunt to meet him in the parking lot of a Dallas airport in April 1966. The men talked but came to no decision, and the next day in Houston, the AFL named Oakland Raiders general manager and head coach Al Davis as its commissioner.

A month later, Hunt and Schramm met again. It appeared the leagues were on their way to a merger, but only days after that at an NFL meeting, New York Giants owner Wellington Mara announced his team had signed Buffalo Bills kicker Pete Gogolak. It was the first time the NFL had signed a free agent from the AFL.

Baltimore Colts owner Carroll Rosenbloom and Green Bay Packers general manager/head coach Vince Lombardi were among the NFL leaders seething. Browne compared the Giants' signing of Gogolak to "throwing gasoline on a burning fire."

"But I give credit to Tex and Lamar for staying with it and for acting as gentlemen," Browne says. "They foresaw that this was the right thing to do. They said, 'Hey, unless we get this merger done, we're going to have teams in both leagues fold, and communities will not have pro football.'"

"You started hearing rumors that something was going on," Mickey Herskowitz, one of three public relations directors Davis hired in the AFL office, says. "Knowing how set on waging war Davis was, I didn't put much stock in that."

The rumors proved to be true. On June 8, 1966, the sides announced a deal after Hunt reluctantly agreed the AFL would pay the NFL a total of $18 million over 10 years.

The final game before the AFL-NFL merger took effect was the Chiefs' 23-7 win over Minnesota in Super Bowl IV, a victory achieved with the help of Otis Taylor (left), who caught six passes, including a 41-yard TD. Right: *Monday Night Football* debuted on Sept. 21, 1970, when the Cleveland Browns hosted the New York Jets. Originally airing on ABC, *MNF* moved to ESPN in 2005 and is one of America's longest-running television series.

Herskowitz, whose office was next to Davis', overheard the commissioner yelling at Hunt, Bills owner Ralph Wilson, and Boston Patriots owner Billy Sullivan after the press conference to announce the merger.

"Ralph said to Al, 'Just tell me if you said I sold you out. Is that true?'" Herskowitz remembers. "Al said, 'No, Ralph, that's not true. What I said was, 'All you bastards sold me out.' That was the tone of their meeting."

Even after the announcement, the NFL considered the AFL's brand of football inferior. The Chiefs heard what Lombardi supposedly said about their league as they prepared for the first AFL-NFL World Championship Game, and they took it personally.

"They called us the 'Mickey Mouse league,'" Hall of Famer Bobby Bell, who played for the Chiefs from 1963-1974, recalls. "They found out later that, hey, the AFL was not a Mickey Mouse league. They thought we were going to fold up and go away."

No one, not even Lombardi, knew that the game to end the 1966 season one day would be renamed Super Bowl I. Or that it would lead to the current-day spectacle. All Lombardi and his Packers knew then was that they were under pressure to win decisively.

At the NFL meetings after the Packers beat the Chiefs, 35-10, Lombardi received a standing ovation. The Packers won the second AFL-NFL World Championship, too, blowing out the Raiders, 33-14.

But then came Namath's "guarantee," which the Jets backed up with a stunning 16-7 upset of the heavily favored Colts in Super Bowl III.

"I definitely felt that way," Namath says. "I don't remember a game I ever went into as a player, whether it was junior high school, high school, or whatever, thinking we were going to lose. I was taught to believe in myself and our team. I had a lot of confidence in our team. I've often joked, 'Who knows, had we played five games or 10 games, maybe Baltimore would have won one of them.'"

As big as that game was for the AFL, the Chiefs' 23-7 victory over the Minnesota Vikings in Super Bowl IV was more important.

"Even with the Jets winning the year before, the experts refused to believe our league was as good," says Hall of Fame kicker Jan Stenerud, who played for the Chiefs from 1967-1979. "We had a chip on our shoulder, and there was a great satisfaction when the AFL won again. After the second one, they couldn't say our league wasn't as good."

The merger became official following that Super Bowl. The Colts, Steelers, and Browns agreed to move to the AFC, and the NFC settled on new divisions after Rozelle's secretary, Thelma Elkjer, drew a plan out of a hat. The one she blindly selected, out of five proposals, was the only one that had the Cowboys in the NFC East.

The 1970 season brought about several other changes, with the NFL adopting the AFL's policy of having players' names on the back of their jerseys and the league adding a wild card team to the postseason in each conference. The league also negotiated new TV contracts, with Rozelle foreseeing the power of television, and Roone Arledge, the president of ABC Sports, foreseeing the power of the NFL.

For the first time, all the NFL's regular-season games were televised on the three major networks at the time. ABC debuted *Monday Night Football* on Sept. 21, 1970, making the NFL the first professional sports league in the U.S. with a regular series in prime time.

"I don't think anyone ever expected that much success from *Monday Night Football*," says Frank Ramos, who retired in 2002 after 39 years in the Jets' public relations department. "It was must-viewing and became so important for television. I hate to throw 'genius' around, but in their field, guys like Rozelle and Roone Arledge really were geniuses to come up with this."

The season ended with the Colts defeating the Cowboys, 16-13, in Super Bowl V, and with a player on the losing team – Dallas linebacker Chuck Howley – earning Super Bowl MVP honors for the first and only time.

It was a unique and somewhat poetic conclusion to a season that marked the start of something big for the new NFL.

***Charean Williams** has covered the NFL for 27 seasons and became the first woman to win the Dick McCann Award for a long and distinguished career covering the sport. She works for NBC's* Pro Football Talk.

BIG PLAYS BY THE BAY

Santonio Holmes (10) secures the touchdown catch that won Super Bowl XLIII for the Steelers. It marked the franchise's sixth Super Bowl crown and capped a wild game full of big plays.

G. Newman Lowrance/AP Images

When Ben Roethlisberger was a grade-schooler playing football in the street, certain things were always the same. The curb was the sideline, the end zone was a car bumper or a driveway up ahead, Roethlisberger was Joe Montana, and whoever was the lucky neighborhood kid that day was John Taylor, catching the Super Bowl XXIII game-winning pass and sending everyone into hysterics.

"That was 'it' when I was a kid. Over and over. And then I got to actually live a 'Super Bowl Moment,'" says the veteran Steelers quarterback, leaving no doubt in his voice that the moment to which he was referring – 12 years ago in Super Bowl XLIII – had a capital M.

Roethlisberger is not one who logs every down and distance he's ever played into his memory. But his throw with 42 seconds left in that game – to wide receiver Santonio Holmes in the back right corner of the end zone at Raymond James Stadium – the one that won the franchise's sixth Lombardi Trophy, is a play he'll never forget.

"Everything about that play was perfect. It was an amazing catch and an amazing throw and amazing protection," Roethlisberger says. "And, come on, it was in the Super Bowl."

The Steelers found themselves trailing for the first time all evening, 23-20, after a stunning 64-yard touchdown catch by Cardinals receiver Larry Fitzgerald (more on that later). Pittsburgh had the ball at its own 22. And Roethlisberger had plenty of time left: two-and-a-half minutes.

"I looked at everyone (in the huddle) and said, 'Let's go get it. This is our time to shine,'" he recalls. "And then on the first play, we went the wrong way."

An offensive holding penalty pushed the Steelers back to their own 12. Unfazed, Roethlisberger completed a couple passes to Holmes to get to the 39, brought his team across midfield, and then on second-and-6 from the Arizona 46-yard line, hit Holmes with a short throw on the right side. Holmes raced through several Cardinals defenders before being tackled at the 6-yard line.

Two plays later, the Steelers were in the end zone. But it wasn't quite that simple.

From the moment the ball was snapped on the decisive play, Cardinals quarterback Kurt Warner remembers screaming from the sideline for someone to take Roethlisberger down. He watched the Steelers signal-caller pump-faking and scrambling and never setting his feet, and Warner thought to himself, "There's no one open."

Roethlisberger said yes, he prolonged the play, but it wasn't an actual improvisation; it was a designed play and Holmes simply wasn't the first, or even the second, read.

"You're watching him throw and you're thinking: 'Oh, my gosh, this has no chance,'" Warner says.

WITH THE STEELERS AND THE CARDINALS GOING TOE-TO-TOE, SUPER BOWL XLIII IN TAMPA DELIVERED SOME OF THE MOST MEMORABLE MOMENTS IN THE GAME'S HISTORY.

BY ADITI KINKHABWALA

Larry Fitzgerald (left) outduels Steelers defender Ike Taylor for the first of his two touchdown receptions for the Cardinals.

Heinz Kluetmeier/Getty Images

Roethlisberger doesn't disagree. He said he genuinely forgot the Steelers were down three points, needing only a field goal to tie the game. Looking back, he says, "That throw is way too risky."

Over the outstretched arms of one defender, over and past three Cardinals deep in the end zone, Roethlisberger slung the ball to Holmes. The lean 5-foot-11 receiver fully extended to his left, caught the ball, and tapped his toes just inside the line.

"We all did it together," Roethlisberger says.

Twenty seconds later, after Warner was sacked and fumbled the ball into the arms of Steelers defensive end Brett Keisel, that throw and catch would go down as the game winner, the biggest kind of big Super Bowl Moments.

Those final heroics were made necessary by a QB-WR connection one drive earlier, on a play that, for a few short minutes, seemed poised to be an MVP-making moment of its own. Of course, when former Steelers safety Ryan Clark thinks about Fitzgerald's long fourth-quarter touchdown grab, he first thinks of Jamaican food.

"There was this Jamaican restaurant in Tampa, and Troy and I pigged out there all week," Clark says, referring to teammate and Pro Football Hall of Fame enshrinee Troy Polamalu. "We'd buy five plates each day. We were so good all year, but as Larry was running down the field, all I could think is, 'We're going to be the reason we lose the Super Bowl. Because we ate too much.'"

It was second-and-10 from the Arizona 36-yard line with 2:47 to play. The Cardinals trailed, 20-16, and the Steelers were in two-deep coverage, with the safeties splitting the deep part of the field. The Arizona play call featured three options: a little 5-yard under route for Fitzgerald, and deeper patterns outside for Anquan Boldin and Steve Breaston.

Steelers cornerback Ike Taylor was on Fitzgerald and, as Clark put it, "100 times out of 100," Taylor has the receiver locked up on a play like that. But Fitzgerald – who had starred at the University of Pittsburgh and was drafted eight spots before Roethlisberger in 2004 – was in the midst of an absurd postseason that year. He ultimately finished with 30 catches for 546 yards and seven TDs in four games.

Clark and Polamalu both went with the deeper receivers. Fitzgerald was Warner's first read, and once he got a step on Taylor, the ball came to him.

"Anquan ended up taking his guy and Troy outside, and there was suddenly this huge cavity down the middle of the field for Larry," Warner explains. "You don't expect that at all. As soon as he beat Ike, you expect the safeties to go to the middle of the field. It turned into an easy pitch and catch."

Easy because no one could catch Fitzgerald.

"You don't expect Larry to outrun everyone," Roethlisberger says. "Don't get me wrong; Larry's a Hall of Famer. But he's not really known for his speed. On that play, he put the burners on."

"He was fast that day," Clark says ruefully.

The Cardinals were less than three minutes away from what would have been their first Super Bowl title. Right after the play, TV cameras

Julie Jacobson/AP Images

An exhausted James Harrison (left) is congratulated by Steelers coach Mike Tomlin after his 100-yard interception-return touchdown to end the first half.

found Clark sitting on his helmet on the sideline, looking pensive.

"I was thinking about all that Jamaican food," he says.

The way Warner remembers it, the Cardinals were only in that position because of the play that ended the first half, one that still ranks as the unlikeliest, craziest, and perhaps biggest of big defensive Super Bowl plays.

It all unfolded just before the two-minute warning with the Steelers clinging to a 10-7 lead and momentum favoring no one. That's when Arizona linebacker Karlos Dansby intercepted a short Roethlisberger pass at the Steelers 34-yard line.

Seven plays later, Warner had the Cardinals on the 1-yard line, with a full set of downs and 18 seconds still on the clock. Warner expected the Steelers to blitz their monstrous pass-rushing linebacker, James Harrison. When the ball was snapped, Warner saw Harrison take a step and seemingly engage his left tackle. He quickly fired a pass toward Boldin.

"I still can't put it all together," Warner says. "I thought we were fine on the outside. James stepped up and was connected to our tackle. There was no chance he was going to be there. I didn't even calculate he'd be there."

"There," of course, being the path of the ball. Instead of landing in Boldin's hands for a touchdown, the ball dropped right into Harrison's. Which, in Harrison's telling, was a sort of calculated risk.

"Blitzing wasn't working; Kurt was getting rid of the ball too fast," Harrison says. "The whole first half, I'd get there, and he had already thrown the ball, so I was like, 'What's the point? I'm just going to play for the ball here.'"

Harrison admits he was almost as surprised as Warner to end up with the ball. That surprise quickly turned to, "I'm gone, this is a touchdown," and then, "Uh-oh, that's a sea of red. I'm not going to make it."

As Harrison raced upfield, the entire Steelers defense became a convoy of blockers escorting him to the end zone. But not before nearly every Cardinals player got in on the return, too. Warner did his best to force Harrison to the inside, where, as he says, "Someone else would come to the party."

"But no," the Hall of Fame quarterback sighs. "No one did."

The Steelers kept picking off would-be tacklers, and Harrison kept – in Warner's words – "going and going and going," until Fitzgerald, who crossed the field in desperate pursuit, almost got to him before being slowed down by a diving Clark just before the end zone.

Roethlisberger was on the sideline, ostensibly watching the defense, but he also recalls being confused.

"I remember it happening so fast. I was like, 'Wait, what just happened?'" he says. When told Warner remembers it seeming to take forever for Harrison to get to the end zone, Roethlisberger laughs and says, "I didn't say James was running fast; I said the play happened fast."

Really, though, for as sweet as the catch was, for as nimbly – and unexpectedly – as Harrison sidestepped and leapt over tacklers along the way, the true charm of the play was the way it engaged nearly everyone on the field.

"That is the biggest play in Super Bowl history. Period," Harrison says. "How many times have you seen somebody catch a pass in the last seconds? A lot. How many 100-yard interception returns have you seen in the Super Bowl? One."

Looking back, Warner says that play is not one of his worst memories. He believes it led to a change in strategy that nearly won the game.

The Cardinals had been dynamic that year by spreading it out and throwing the ball. But in the first half of that Super Bowl, the offense was, as Warner recalls, "just kind of managing things to stay in the game. That play forced us to open things up and play our brand of football. And if we were going to lose in the second half, I wanted us to lose playing the football that got us there."

Warner, like Clark, now spends his days analyzing games on the gridiron. He says there's an absolute magic to making big plays in the Super Bowl, and that magic is to not make them feel so big.

"It's being able to make a big moment a normal moment," Warner explains. "You understand the magnitude of it, but that doesn't prevent you from being able to make the play in the moment it needs to be made. That's what makes great players great."

And it doesn't matter if it's a 5-yard throw that goes for 64. Or a lofted low-percentage pass that ends in an absurd toe-tap. Or a logic-defying 100-yard interception return.

When Super Bowl Sunday arrives, you can be certain someone will play his best football, rise to the challenge, and make one of those Montana – or Roethlisberger or Fitzgerald or Harrison – moments happen.

Aditi Kinkhabwala *has been a reporter on NFL Network since 2012. Previously, she was a writer at the* Wall Street Journal *and, before that, the* Bergen Record *and* San Antonio Express-News.

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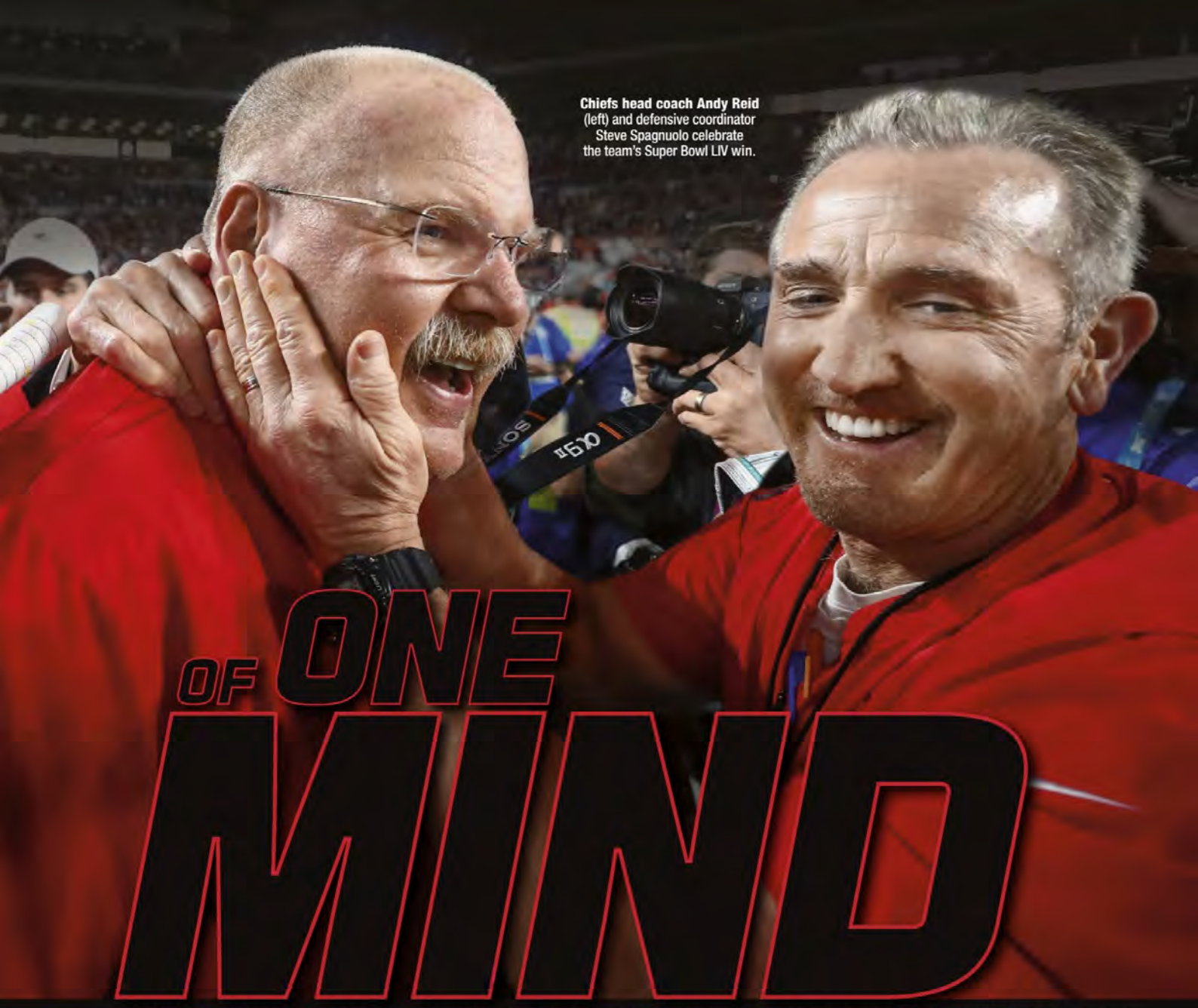

Chiefs head coach Andy Reid (left) and defensive coordinator Steve Spagnuolo celebrate the team's Super Bowl LIV win.

Steve Sanders/Kansas City Chiefs

OF ONE MIND

SYNERGY BETWEEN HEAD COACHES AND THEIR ASSISTANTS CAN PRODUCE "SUPER" RESULTS. BY MIKE GARAFOLO

IN FEBRUARY 2008, STEVE SPAGNUOLO directed the New York Giants' defense to a historic upset of the previously undefeated New England Patriots in Super Bowl XLII, celebrated in a parade down the Canyon of Heroes in New York, and put himself on the doorstep of becoming an NFL head coach.

It was an incredible experience that was missing just one thing: Andy Reid.

Spagnuolo always envisioned winning a Super Bowl with the head coach who had brought him to the NFL a decade earlier with the Philadelphia Eagles.

Last year in Miami, Spagnuolo finally enjoyed that moment with Reid – amongst confetti of a color different than what he'd imagined.

"Winning in New York, I was blessed to have gone through that. When I came to Kansas City, every working hour in my mind was to help Andy get [a Super Bowl title]," says Spagnuolo, who was hired as the Chiefs' defensive coordinator in January 2019. "Anybody who's worked for him will tell you the same thing. You're loyal to him. He's a special guy, special coach. You want to help people like that achieve the ultimate dream.

"I didn't mind putting in the hours if, at the end of it, I could see that beautiful smiling face of his and that mustache."

Spagnuolo has a picture on his desk of the moment he and Reid celebrated their championship – following the Chiefs' 31-20 victory over the San Francisco 49ers in Super Bowl LIV – with Spagnuolo holding Reid's "beautiful" face with both hands.

It wasn't until later that the media realized another significant accomplishment had taken place: Spagnuolo was the first coordinator – offensive or defensive – to win a Super Bowl with two different teams.

"You don't think of that when it's happening. You're just thinking about winning together as a team," Spagnuolo said recently. "It's not until somebody walks up and says, 'Hey, did you know you did this? First year with a team both times. NFC and AFC.'

"You're not trying to win for those reasons. But it's nice later on when people bring it to your attention."

THREE ASSISTANT COACHES are tied at the top of the list with six Super Bowl rings. Not surprisingly, they all have a connection to Bill Belichick.

One is Josh McDaniels, who has five rings as a Patriots coach (defensive assistant, quarterbacks coach, and offensive coordinator), with his first ring coming as a personnel assistant.

"I think he's the top offensive coordinator in the league," Belichick said of McDaniels in 2018. "He's done a great job for me for a long time in a lot of different roles."

Then there's Ivan Fears, a 44-year coaching veteran whose current stint in New England started in 1999, one year before Belichick took the reins. Fears was the wide receivers coach when the Patriots won Super Bowl XXXVI and has been the team's running backs coach for the past five titles.

The coach and the team are a perfect fit.

"I wouldn't be here for 20-plus years if I wasn't enjoying it," Fears says. "I want to find a way to win. The people we're up against, they're pretty damn good. Everybody is.

"Sometimes you've got to work just a little harder to find that edge that's going to give you the difference. Now, if you don't think that's fun, where's the competitor?"

The third assistant with six rings earned half of them with Belichick in New England and the other half as a member of the Dallas Cowboys dynasty of the 1990s.

If you guessed strength and conditioning coach Mike Woicik, you're either an extremely knowledgeable NFL fan or you're Mike Woicik.

Not that Woicik, a throwback personality who shuns the spotlight, would pound his own chest.

That left the late Markus Paul to be Woicik's biggest booster. Paul, who was coached by his mentor at Syracuse and later worked as his assistant, said, "When I got a job with the Jets, I put in my media guide bio that I trained under

Charles Krupa/AP Images

Albert Dickson/Getty Images

Stephan Savoia/AP Images

Several assistant coaches have played key roles in the Patriots' success. Among them are (clockwise from top left) Dante Scarnecchia, whose 10 Super Bowl appearances are the most of any assistant; Charlie Weis, the offensive coordinator for the team's first three Super Bowl wins; and Romeo Crennel, the team's defensive coordinator during that same span.

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Longtime NFL assistant coach Mike Pope (right), shown with Martellus Bennett after a 2012 Giants game, was on staff for all four of the Giants' Super Bowl championships – the first two under Bill Parcells and the last two with Tom Coughlin. Overall, Pope spent 34 seasons in the league, 23 of those (1983-91, 2000-13) as the Giants' tight ends coach.

Mike Woicik, who has six Super Bowl rings. And he got upset: 'Why did you do that?!' I was like, 'Shut up, you won't do it, so I'll let everybody know. They need to know.'"

Paul, who also played five seasons in the NFL, was himself being humble. He won three Super Bowl rings while working with the Patriots.

THE RECORD FOR SUPER BOWL WINS as a coordinator is three, shared by former Washington defensive coordinator Richie Petitbon and ex-Patriots coordinators Charlie Weis and Romeo Crennel.

Weis made his stamp on Super Bowl history in the Pats' first championship, after the Rams tied Super Bowl XXXVI with just 1:37 to play. In FOX's broadcast booth, John Madden suggested New England and young, unproven quarterback Tom Brady play conservatively and hope for the best in overtime.

Belichick asked his offensive coordinator for his thoughts. Weis said the Rams had the momentum, so why not control their own fate now? But Weis was careful to tell Brady not to force anything.

On the first play, Brady nearly got sacked before checking it down.

Whew.

The rest is Super Bowl history, as Brady engineered a nine-play drive that culminated in Adam Vinatieri's 48-yard field goal and kick-started a two-decade run of greatness.

"Bill was really good at letting you coach. He didn't tell you what to do," Weis explains. "Expectations are high, it's grueling hours, and all that other stuff, but you always felt prepared. He forced you to think right along with him, so you always had to be prepared, because if not, you'd fall behind and end up not being around very long."

Weis and Crennel were around for two more Super Bowl championships. After the last one, Belichick hugged them, knowing it was their final moments together as a staff. Weis was headed to Notre Dame to become its head coach; Crennel was about to take over as the Cleveland Browns' head coach.

"It's funny you mention that [moment]. I was just in my house in Indiana and was looking at that picture for about five minutes," Weis says. "There was very good chemistry between us. We got along well; we all thought alike."

THE CHEMISTRY ON Belichick's staff extends to his position coaches, particularly former offensive line coach/assistant head coach Dante Scarnecchia.

"Scar" coached in 10 Super Bowls – a record among assistant coaches. He enjoyed five wins, but also dealt with five losses.

"The most miserable experience," Scarnecchia says of those defeats. "You can say all you want about getting there, but when the confetti's dropping and it's the other guys' color, all you can do, and all they want you to do, is to get off the field as fast as you can."

Scarnecchia was an assistant on Patriots teams that lost Super Bowls XX and XXXI. But in his first 14 seasons with Belichick, he picked up three rings. He retired following the 2013 season and watched the Patriots win Super Bowl XLIX over the Seattle Seahawks, then returned in 2016 when Belichick had an opening for an offensive line coach.

Four seasons and two more rings later, Scarnecchia was glad he came back.

"People say, 'Man, Bill must be so hard to

AP Images

Beloved by those who played for him, Bears defensive coordinator Buddy Ryan is carried off the field following the team's Super Bowl XX victory. Ryan left Chicago after the 1985 season to become the Eagles' head coach.

work for.' He's really not," says Scarnecchia, who retired in January 2020 having spent 34 of his 36 seasons in the NFL with the Patriots. "He makes it very clear what he wants, and he makes his vision obvious to everyone. Adhere to those standards, and there's never a problem. Never a problem."

AMONG CORNERSTONE franchises that have made a handful of Super Bowl appearances, only one coach can say he was there for all of them: the Giants' Mike Pope, thought by many to be the best tight ends coach in history.

Pope, who tutored such tight ends as Mark Bavaro, Howard Cross, Jeremy Shockey, Ben Coates, and Jason Witten over his 34-year career, enjoyed wins in Super Bowls XXI (over the Denver Broncos) and XXV (over the Buffalo Bills) before a loss to the Baltimore Ravens in Super Bowl XXXV.

Then there was Super Bowl XLII, when the Giants entered the game as nearly a two-touchdown underdog to the Patriots.

Most fans remember David Tyree's helmet catch as the seminal moment, but don't overlook the importance of the Giants' first offensive snap of the fourth quarter: a 45-yard reception by tight end Kevin Boss that pulled the offense out of a rut and set up their first touchdown. It was a play drawn up on the sideline by Pope and offensive coordinator Kevin Gilbride, and it worked to perfection.

Of course, Pope knows coaches can only do so much. The rest – like Eli Manning escaping and finding Tyree or Manning's completion to Mario Manningham four years later during another win over the Patriots – is Super Bowl magic.

"If you coached small-league football, the first thing you'd tell the quarterback is never throw the ball in the middle of the field when there's a safety standing there," Pope says of the pass to Tyree. "And the Manningham play, the ball went over the wrong shoulder and he somehow made the catch when he couldn't see it.

"Those things you can't coach."

THE NIGHT BEFORE SUPER BOWL XX in New Orleans, Chicago Bears defensive coordinator Buddy Ryan gave a passionate speech. With tears in his eyes, he told his players they would always be his "champions" and then walked out.

Defensive line coach Dale Haupt tried to show the players some film, but Dan Hampton kicked the projector out of his hands while fellow lineman Steve McMichael threw a chair.

No more words or images were needed. The '85 Bears defense was ready for the Patriots.

With the game a runaway in the fourth quarter and the starters relaxing on the bench, McMichael and William "Refrigerator" Perry planned to carry head coach Mike Ditka off the sideline. End Richard Dent and linebacker Otis Wilson believed Ryan, in his final game with the Bears before becoming the Eagles' head coach, deserved a similar honor.

And so Ryan became the only assistant coach in Super Bowl history to be carried by his players.

"When you look at the picture, you can see in his face how he felt. I remember glancing up once, he seemed to be very…" Dent says, his voice trailing off with emotion. "I appreciated how he turned his system over to us, made us be responsible, and pushed us to levels you don't know you have."

SUCCESSFUL ASSISTANT COACHES in Super Bowl history share a common ground – they were of one mind with their head coach.

Ryan was the brash defensive coordinator Ditka needed. Belichick requires calm, deep thinkers on his coaching staff. And for the 49ers dynasty of the 1980s, one needed to have the qualities head coach Bill Walsh desired.

Bill McPherson and Ray Rhodes were the only assistants on staff for all five of the 49ers' Super Bowl wins. Linebacker Keena Turner has fond memories of both coaches, who he described as "teachers," which Walsh admired in those on his staff.

"It's a simple game. You look at it and know who's winning, and that's why we love it so much," Turner says. "But the detail of it, how you coach and teach the game, is where some coaches are better than others.

"And the great ones are really good."

Mike Garafolo *is a reporter and host for NFL Network who has covered the NFL since 2002. He lives in New Jersey with his wife, Jessica, and two daughters.*

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The NFL championed the message of unity during the 2020 season, which included the "It Takes All of Us" campaign.

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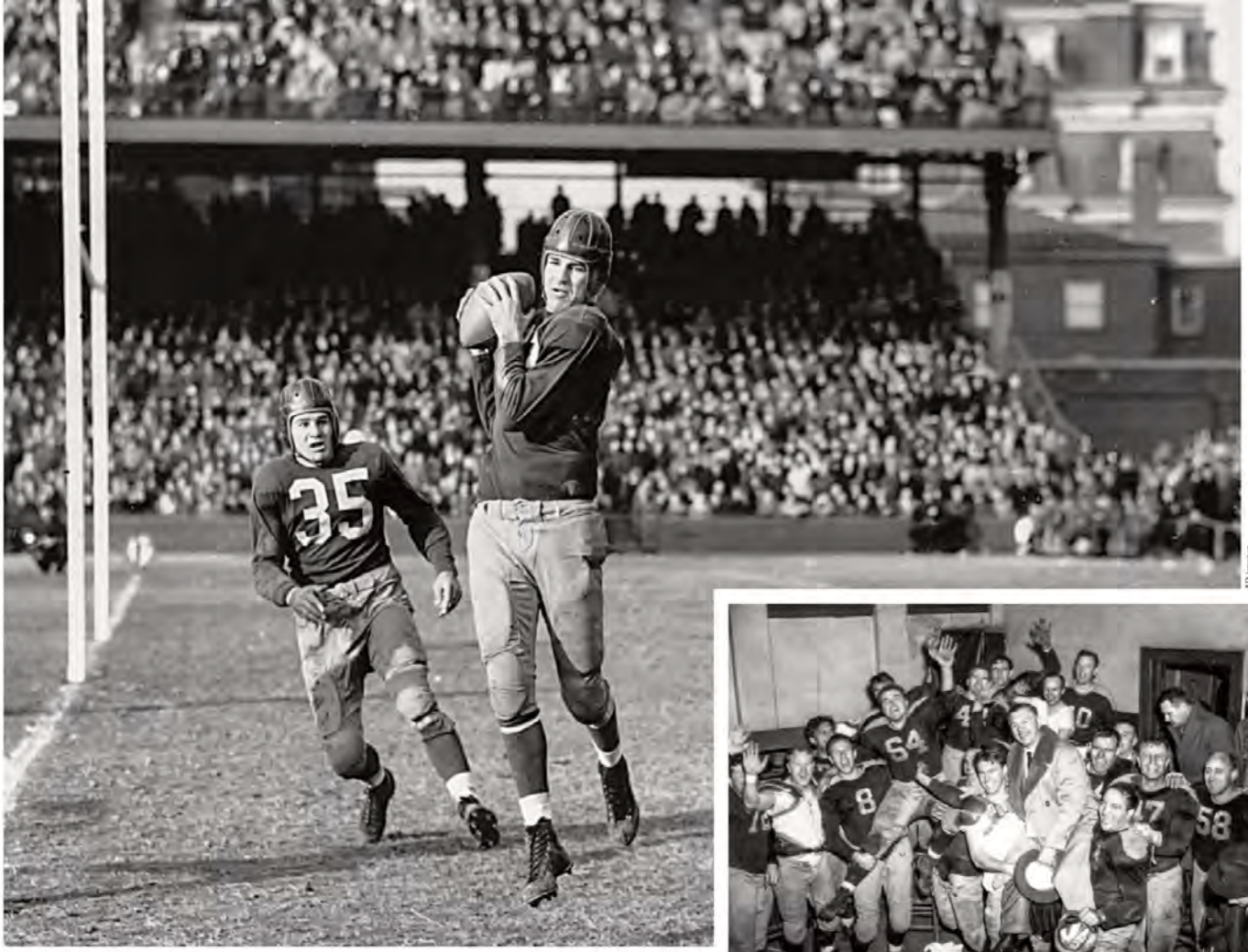
TRIUMPH OVER TURMOIL

IN ITS CENTURY OF EXISTENCE, THE NFL HAS NAVIGATED OUR NATION'S CHALLENGES BY OFFERING HOPE, HELP, AND HEALING. BY JUDY BATTISTA



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Even with numerous NFL players, coaches, and team owners serving in World War II, the league carried on. Sammy Baugh (above) intercepts a pass for Washington during the 1942 NFL title game, while the Green Bay Packers (right) celebrate their 1944 championship game win over the Giants.

From its very beginning, the NFL has been challenged by some of America's greatest trials.

In fact, one of the earliest attempts to form a national professional football league was thwarted by the country's entry into World War I and the Spanish Flu pandemic of 1918. The all-star games between military men and college players that helped raise money for the war effort, though, may have given a boost to those interested in forming a league. The NFL was created in 1920, less than two years after the end of the war.

So while the circumstances of the 2020 season – played during the COVID-19 pandemic and with the nation immersed in a racial justice movement – have been extraordinary, they are not an anomaly. For 100 years, the NFL has grappled with history's most defining moments. In some cases, especially early on, the moments shaped the NFL. In later years, NFL players and teams played critical roles in making changes.

"I think it's been a constant – sports – as part of this country as long as it's been in existence, during turbulent times, it's something we have in common," says former Pittsburgh Steelers running back Rocky Bleier, who was awarded a Bronze Star and Purple Heart for his military service in Vietnam and returned to win four Super Bowls. "No matter what might have been going on, here is something we could identify with."

The first years of the NFL were a test of determination and resilience. The country, fresh out of war, was now about to sink into the Great Depression. During the late 1920s and into the '30s, teams struggled to attract fans, many who could not afford to buy tickets, and lost players who sought better-paying jobs.

Some teams moved. Others folded.

In 1932, just eight teams remained, although a year later, three teams joined the league, including the Philadelphia Eagles and a Pittsburgh-based team owned by Art Rooney that would later be renamed the Steelers. As the economy began to recover, the league stabilized and

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After serving during the Vietnam War, where he was awarded a Purple Heart and a Bronze Star, Rocky Bleier returned to the Steelers and was part of four Super Bowl championships.

Getty Images

had a huge breakthrough with fans – its first game was televised in 1939.

It soon confronted another crisis: In the early 1940s, players left to fight in World War II. The war claimed the lives of 21 NFL players, coaches, and executives; for the teams at home, the manpower shortage was so severe that retired players had to return to action to fill the holes.

In 1943, the Brooklyn Dodgers opened camp with just seven players available from their 1942 team. That same year, the Cleveland Rams had to suspend operations for lack of players. The Steelers and Eagles merged, creating the "Steagles" and splitting home games between the two cities. A year later, the Steagles dissolved and the Card-Pitts were created from a merger of the Steelers and Chicago Cardinals.

But as the country flourished in the post-World War II years, so did the NFL. In 1946, permission was granted to move the Rams to Los Angeles. And Kenny Washington and Woody Strode were signed as the first Black players of the modern era. More teams made deals to have their games on television.

Bleier was just a child then, but by the time he was a high school star in the early 1960s, the civil rights movement was making its mark on football. Some players and teams challenged Jim Crow laws in the South, which prohibited Blacks from staying in the same hotels as their white teammates. Several Black players refused to play, even paying for their stand with their jobs.

Other teams were more progressive – Raiders owner Al Davis never allowed his team to play in a city where Black and white players had to stay in different hotels. In 1963, with the Raiders scheduled to play a preseason game in Mobile, Ala., Davis demanded the contest be moved in protest of the state's segregation laws.

On Feb. 25, 1964, Cleveland Browns Hall of Fame running back Jim Brown was part of a fascinating meeting. After Cassius Clay stunned Sonny Liston at the Miami Beach Convention Center, the new heavyweight boxing champion celebrated at his Jim Crow-era hotel in the Brownsville neighborhood of Miami with Brown, singer Sam Cooke, and Malcolm X.

Brown would emerge as one of the most outspoken athletes during the movement, and after he retired, he worked on Black economic empowerment. In 1967, he convened a famed meeting in Cleveland, which included Bill Russell, Lew Alcindor and a host of football players to support Clay – who had since changed his name to Muhammad Ali – after the boxer was stripped of his title and faced charges of draft dodging for refusing to serve in the Vietnam War.

Bleier was drafted into the U.S. Army after his rookie season in 1968. He was in basic training in Fort Gordon, Ga., in January 1969 when Joe Namath's New York Jets defeated the Baltimore Colts in Super Bowl III and remembers watching the game – he was rooting for the Jets because they were such heavy underdogs – with his fellow servicemen.

"Football was a stable course," Bleier says. "It was the commonality we all shared. From the soldiers' point of view, it was at least something that was a constant. Our [country] back then, with the protests, student movements, the civil rights movements, and assassinations, was in a flux somewhat like today. It was, 'What the heck is going on?' but yet life was still focused. At least my world was focused."

Bleier deployed to South Vietnam and was injured in August 1969 when his platoon was ambushed in a rice paddy. He lost part of his right

Jim Davis/Getty Images

K. Mazur/Getty Images

Tributes flowed in the aftermath of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on America. Left: In the Patriots' first game after the NFL resumed play, offensive lineman Joe Andruzzi's three brothers – all New York City firefighters – were recognized during a pregame ceremony at Foxboro Stadium. At Super Bowl XXXVI, U2's halftime performance (right) featured a scrolling list of the nearly 3,000 people who lost their lives in the tragedy.

foot in a grenade blast and suffered a gunshot wound. He returned to the Steelers, recovering from his injuries during the 1970 season and battling for playing time in 1971. He wound up being part of all four of the Steelers' Super Bowl championship teams of the 1970s.

The explosive growth of the NFL during that decade was intertwined with enormous changes in American life, and the spread of Steelers fans was a microcosm of those changes. The decline of the steel industry and manufacturing in the region forced many people in the Rust Belt to move to the Sun Belt in pursuit of new jobs. They carried their loyalty to their football teams with them, boosting the NFL into its dominant spot on the national sporting landscape.

"The biggest thing is to have a goal, or a dream to get through that transition," Bleier says. "For me, it became very important – that was my driving point. The military was a part of my life. It happened. My real love was to try to get back to playing this game of football."

For Damien Woody, the obligation he felt as a player in a time of crisis was to try to provide a slice of normalcy when nothing else felt familiar. Woody was the starting center for the New England Patriots in 2001 and watched the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center from the team's training room. The NFL postponed that weekend's games, so the Patriots next played 12 days later against the New York Jets.

When the Patriots took the Foxboro Stadium field as a team, they were led by offensive guard and Staten Island-born Joe Andruzzi, who waved two American flags. Andruzzi jogged to the 50-yard line, where he was joined by his three brothers, all of them New York City firefighters.

"There was so much energy in that stadium," Woody says. "Unlike anything I've ever felt in a stadium. The way people were singing the national anthem, it was unbelievable. When the Andruzzis came out, it made you tear up. I don't know if there was a dry-eyed person in the entire pregame. After the fact, you realize sports do a really good job of bringing people together. Sports are a unifying force."

It was a spine-tingling moment for the country and, as it turned out, a transformative day for the NFL, too. That afternoon, backup quarterback Tom Brady replaced an injured Drew Bledsoe in the Patriots lineup. Five months later, with Brady leading the way, New England won its first Super Bowl.

While no one wishes for more struggles, Scott Fujita was intrigued by the idea of playing in New Orleans just months after Hurricane Katrina devastated the city, specifically because of the long road to recovery the city faced. Fujita was a linebacker for the Dallas Cowboys in 2005, when the hurricane struck the Gulf Coast just days before the season was to kick off. The Superdome was heavily damaged, the city flooded, and the Saints became a team of nomads, playing "home" games in New Jersey, San Antonio, and Baton Rouge. There were rumblings that the Saints might never return to their old home.

The NFL made sure they would, and Sean Payton was hired as the head coach after the 2005 season mercifully ended. Fujita became a free agent that offseason and made New Orleans his first visit. While there, he walked around town and was taken aback by the fans, who thanked him for even contemplating joining the Saints under the circumstances.

"My wife and I kept thinking it's a chance to be part of something much bigger than football, the process of overcoming adversity," Fujita recalls. "If we come in as a group, we're going to have to figure out a lot; we don't even know if we have a building to play in. That seemed interesting."

The city began to recover just as the team did, and members of the franchise became active volunteers in community rebuilding. The Saints played their first two games of the 2006 season on the road, winning both. Then came the long-awaited return home.

On an electrifying Monday night, the Superdome reopened and, spurred by a Steve Gleason blocked punt that is immortalized in a statue outside the dome, the Saints became part of New Orleans legend with an emotional victory over the Atlanta Falcons. They would make it

Gerald Herbert/AP Images

Kevin C. Cox/Getty Images

The seminal moment in Saints history – Steve Gleason's block of a punt in the team's first home game following Hurricane Katrina – is captured in the bronze statue "Rebirth" (above) outside Mercedes-Benz Superdome. Linebacker Scott Fujita (right) was drawn to the Saints so he could be part of helping the city of New Orleans rebuild.

all the way to the NFC Championship Game that season.

"That was the most enjoyable part of the process, to get in when we did, to have a symbiotic relationship," Fujita says. "You felt like you were in it together. I had the good fortune of playing in good football towns and nowhere did the marriage run deeper than [New Orleans]. They were aligned with us. I don't think we were the most talented team in the league, but that emotional lift of the community got us to knocking on the door of the Super Bowl."

In 2009, the Saints finally made it to the Super Bowl and won it, a rise as surprising and emotional as the city's renaissance.

"I don't even know if it took the Super Bowl to do it," says Fujita, who was part of that championship team. "Us returning, the Superdome reopening, that shared partnership, the team rebuilding the community, the community rebuilding the team – metaphorically and literally – made that thing work. It accelerated the redevelopment of the town."

Fujita is an educator in California now, and he watched from a distance during 2020 as the NFL again played a role during another seismic upheaval in American life. He thought back to what the 2006 season had shown him.

"I use clichés and 'coach speak' all the time because clichés are true," Fujita says. "I also want to have a healthy sense of perspective. During unique moments in time, sports can create a distraction that is much needed."

Judy Battista *is an award-winning sportswriter who has covered the NFL since 2000. She is a columnist and on-air analyst for NFL.com and the NFL Network.*

Chris O'Meara/AP Images

SNAPSHOTS FROM HISTORY

RECAPPING THE STARS AND STORIES OF SUPER BOWLS I-LIV

Bob Rosato/Getty Images

Jets Give AFL First Super Bowl Win, 16-7

Joe Guaranteed It

The Miami Herald

SPORTS

FLORIDA'S COMPLETE COVERAGE

Monday, Jan. 13, 1969 Sec. D

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Super Bowl memories across the years include: (top) Tracy Porter's interception-return TD for the Saints in Super Bowl XLIV; and (bottom, left to right) the Giants' Plaxico Burress' game-winning TD catch in Super Bowl XLII, the *Miami Herald* headline following the Jets' Super Bowl III upset, and Adam Vinatieri's field goal for the Patriots that won Super Bowl XXXVI.

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Terry Tomsic/USA TODAY Sports

Packers QB Bart Starr was named the Most Valuable Player of the first two Super Bowls.

I

January 15, 1967
Memorial Coliseum | Los Angeles
Attendance: 61,946

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Kansas City	0	10	0	0	10
Green Bay	7	7	14	7	35

MVP: Bart Starr (QB), Green Bay
16 of 23 passing, 250 yards, 2 TDs

The Packers opened the Super Bowl era by defeating the AFL champion Chiefs behind the passing of Bart Starr, the receiving of Max McGee, and a key interception by safety Willie Wood. Leading by a narrow 14-10 margin at the half, Green Bay took control with three second-half touchdowns, the first of which was set up by Wood's 50-yard interception return. McGee, filling in for an ailing Boyd Dowler after having only four receptions all season, caught seven passes for 138 yards and two touchdowns. Elijah Pitts ran for two other Packers scores. All of the Chiefs' points came in the second quarter, including a 7-yard TD pass from Len Dawson to Curtis McClinton.

II

January 14, 1968
Orange Bowl | Miami
Attendance: 75,546

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Green Bay	3	13	10	7	33
Oakland	0	7	0	7	14

MVP: Bart Starr (QB), Green Bay
13 of 24 passing, 202 yards, 1 TD

Two weeks after capturing its third consecutive NFL championship, Green Bay won the Super Bowl title for the second straight year, defeating the Raiders in a game that drew the first $3 million gate in football history. Bart Starr directed an attack that built a 16-7 halftime lead and pulled away after intermission. Don Chandler kicked four field goals for the victors, and cornerback Herb Adderley capped the Green Bay scoring with his 60-yard interception-return TD. The game marked the last for Vince Lombardi as Packers coach, ending a tenure that saw him win five NFL titles and two Super Bowls.

III

January 12, 1969
Orange Bowl | Miami
Attendance: 75,389

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
N.Y. Jets	0	7	6	3	16
Baltimore	0	0	0	7	7

MVP: Joe Namath (QB), N.Y. Jets
17 of 28 passing, 206 yards

Jets quarterback Joe Namath "guaranteed" victory on the Thursday before the game, then went out and delivered by leading the AFL's Jets to a huge upset – beating a Colts team that had lost only once all season. Namath directed a steady attack that dominated the NFL champions, while the Jets' defense intercepted Colts quarterback Earl Morrall three times in the first half. New York had 337 total yards, including 121 on the ground from Matt Snell. Johnny Unitas, who missed most of the season with a sore elbow, came off the bench to lead Baltimore to its only touchdown late in the fourth quarter.

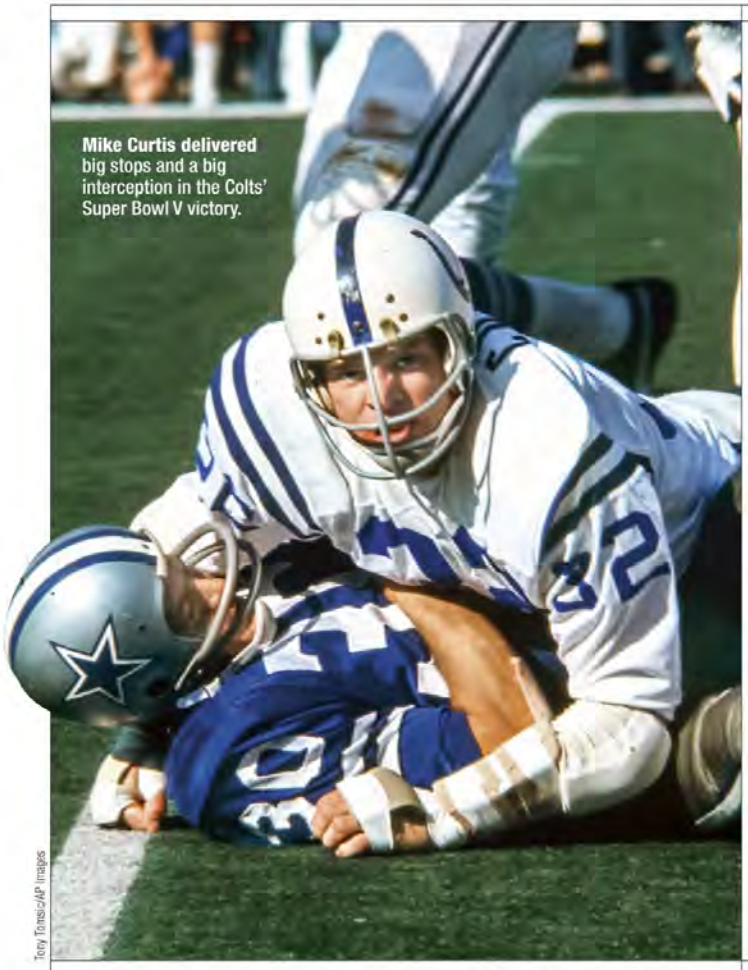
IV

January 11, 1970
Tulane Stadium | New Orleans
Attendance: 80,562

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Minnesota	0	0	7	0	7
Kansas City	3	13	7	0	23

MVP: Len Dawson (QB), Kansas City
12 of 17 passing, 142 yards, 1 TD

The AFL squared the Super Bowl series at two victories apiece behind Len Dawson's superb quarterbacking and a powerful defense. Dawson called an almost flawless game and hit Otis Taylor on a 46-yard pass for the Chiefs' final touchdown, minutes after the Vikings scored their only points. The Kansas City defense limited Minnesota's strong rushing game to 67 yards and forced five turnovers (three interceptions and two lost fumbles). Jan Stenerud provided an early spark for the Chiefs with field goals from 48, 32, and 25 yards, while Mike Garrett's 5-yard TD run before halftime made it 16-0.



Mike Curtis delivered big stops and a big interception in the Colts' Super Bowl V victory.

Terry Tarnes/AP Images

V

January 17, 1971
Orange Bowl | Miami
Attendance: 79,204

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Baltimore	0	6	0	10	16
Dallas	3	10	0	0	13

MVP: Chuck Howley (LB), Dallas
2 interceptions, 3 tackles

A 32-yard field goal by rookie kicker Jim O'Brien brought the Colts to victory in the closing seconds of Super Bowl V, the first time the game was played on artificial turf. The Cowboys led, 13-6, in the fourth quarter, but interceptions by Rick Volk and Mike Curtis set up a Baltimore touchdown and O'Brien's decisive kick. Johnny Unitas threw for the Colts' first touchdown – a pass that caromed off receiver Eddie Hinton's fingertips, off Dallas' Mel Renfro, and settled into the hands of tight end John Mackey, who scored on the 75-yard play. The Cowboys' Chuck Howley became the first defensive player and the first (and still only) player from a losing team to be named Super Bowl MVP.

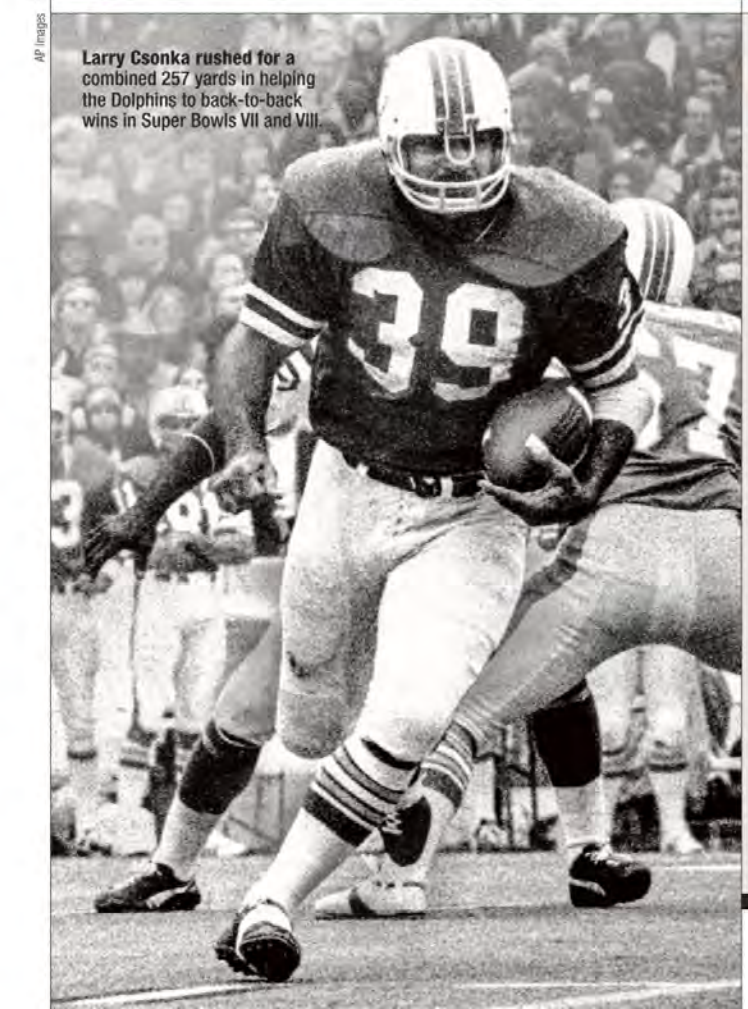
VI

January 16, 1972
Tulane Stadium | New Orleans
Attendance: 81,023

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Dallas	3	7	7	7	24
Miami	0	3	0	0	3

MVP: Roger Staubach (QB), Dallas
12 of 19 passing, 119 yards, 2 TDs

The Cowboys rushed for 252 yards, and their defense limited the Dolphins to just 185 total yards and became the first to not allow a touchdown in the Super Bowl. Chuck Howley's recovery of a Larry Csonka fumble led to a 3-0 Dallas advantage, and a Roger Staubach TD pass to Lance Alworth made it 10-3 at the break. After the Cowboys received the second-half kickoff, Duane Thomas keyed a 71-yard march that ended with his 3-yard scoring run. Early in the fourth quarter, Howley picked off a pass that he returned deep into Miami territory, and three plays later, Staubach passed 7 yards to Mike Ditka for the game's final touchdown. Thomas finished with 95 rushing yards and teammate Walt Garrison added 74.



Larry Csonka rushed for a combined 257 yards in helping the Dolphins to back-to-back wins in Super Bowls VII and VIII.

AP Images

VII

January 14, 1973
Memorial Coliseum | Los Angeles
Attendance: 90,182

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Miami	7	7	0	0	14
Washington	0	0	0	7	7

MVP: Jake Scott (S), Miami
2 interceptions

On their way to perfection, the Dolphins played virtually perfect football. Their defense allowed Washington to cross midfield only once in the first half, and Miami's offense turned good field position into two touchdowns. The Dolphins drove 63 yards for their first score, a 28-yard pass from Bob Griese to Howard Twilley. After Washington reached the Miami 48 late in the first half, linebacker Nick Buoniconti intercepted a pass that he returned 25 yards. Five plays later, just 18 seconds before intermission, Jim Kiick scored on a 1-yard run. Dolphins safety Jake Scott had two interceptions, one in the end zone that ended another Washington threat.

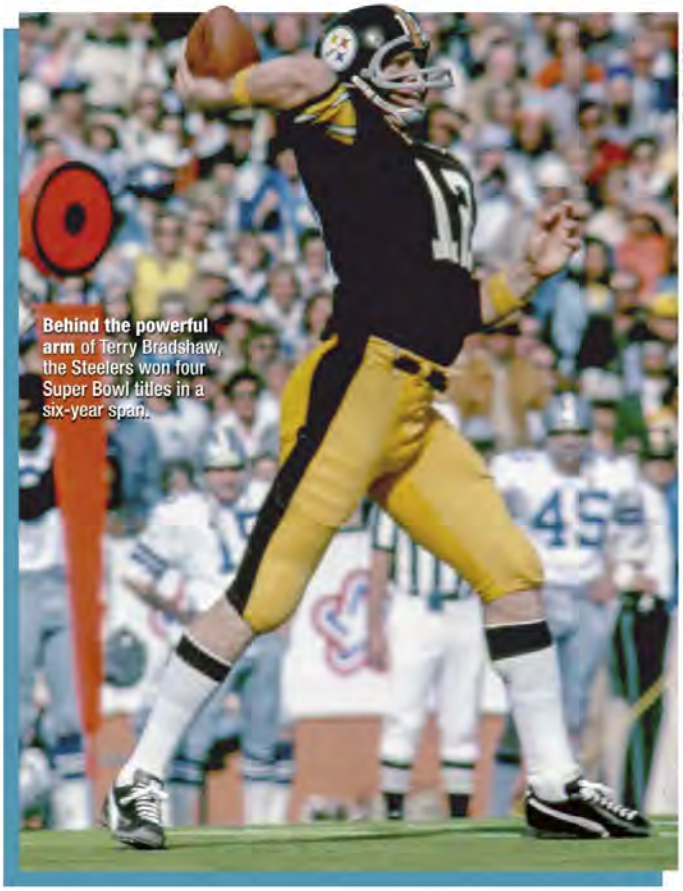
VIII

January 13, 1974
Rice Stadium | Houston
Attendance: 71,882

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Minnesota	0	0	0	7	7
Miami	14	3	7	0	24

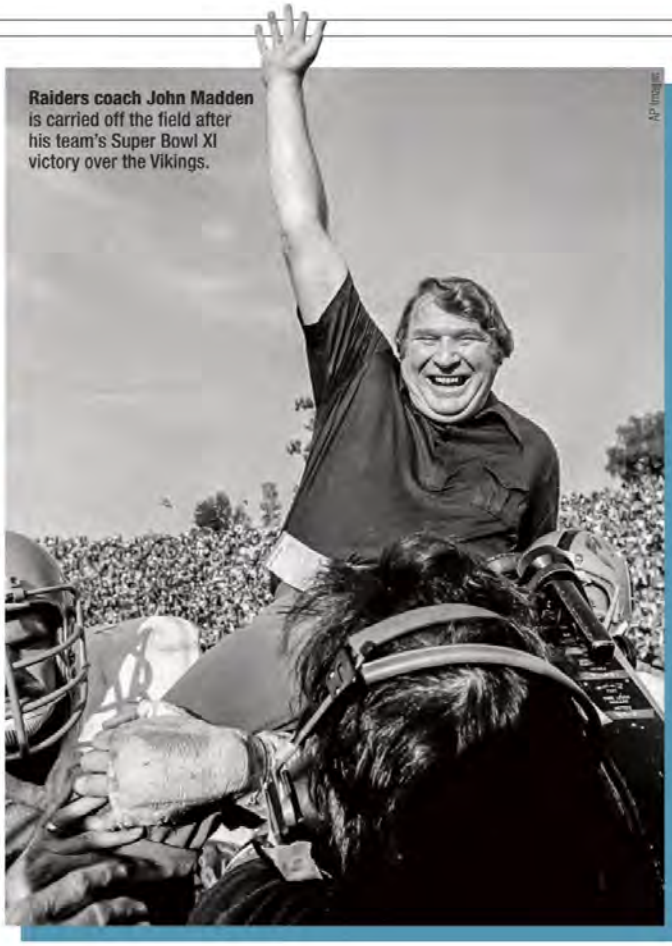
MVP: Larry Csonka (RB), Miami
33 carries, 145 yards, 2 TDs

Representing the AFC for the third consecutive year, the Dolphins scored the first two times they had the ball – on marches of 62 and 56 yards – while their defense limited Minnesota to only seven plays in the first quarter. Larry Csonka capped the initial 10-play drive with his 5-yard TD bolt through right guard, and another 10-play scoring drive ended with Jim Kiick bursting 1 yard up the middle. Garo Yepremian's 28-yard field goal made it 17-0. The Vikings would then drive deep into Miami territory, but were stopped on fourth-and-1 from the 6 on a big hit by middle linebacker Nick Buoniconti.



Tony Tomsic/AP Images

Behind the powerful arm of Terry Bradshaw, the Steelers won four Super Bowl titles in a six-year span.



AP Images

Raiders coach John Madden is carried off the field after his team's Super Bowl XI victory over the Vikings.

IX

January 12, 1975
Tulane Stadium | New Orleans
Attendance: 80,997

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Pittsburgh	0	2	7	7	16
Minnesota	0	0	0	6	6

MVP: Franco Harris (RB), Pittsburgh
34 carries, 158 yards, 1 TD

Pittsburgh's football history began a new chapter when the Steelers defeated the Vikings, the first of four Super Bowl titles won under coach Chuck Noll. The teams struggled through a first half that saw the only points scored when Pittsburgh's Dwight White downed quarterback Fran Tarkenton in the end zone for a safety. But it didn't take long for the Steelers to add to that lead after intermission. Minnesota's Bill Brown fumbled the second-half kickoff and Marv Kellum recovered on the Vikings 30. Four plays later, Franco Harris' 9-yard touchdown run gave his team a 9-0 lead. Pittsburgh's powerful defense permitted only 119 yards on the day, including 17 rushing yards.

X

January 18, 1976
Orange Bowl | Miami
Attendance: 80,187

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Dallas	7	3	0	7	17
Pittsburgh	7	0	0	14	21

MVP: Lynn Swann (WR), Pittsburgh
4 receptions, 161 yards, 1 TD

The Steelers captured the Super Bowl for the second straight year, helped along by Terry Bradshaw's 64-yard touchdown pass to Lynn Swann and an aggressive defense that snuffed out a late Dallas rally. The Steelers scored on Bradshaw's 7-yard TD pass to Randy Grossman, the long throw to Swann, Roy Gerela's 36- and 18-yard field goals, and Reggie Harrison's blocked punt that went through the end zone for a safety. Dallas, though, still only trailed by four when it took possession with 1:22 to go, but had its hopes dashed on Glen Edwards' end-zone interception on the game's final play.

XI

January 9, 1977
Rose Bowl | Pasadena
Attendance: 103,438

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Oakland	0	16	3	13	32
Minnesota	0	0	7	7	14

MVP: Fred Biletnikoff (WR), Oakland
4 receptions, 79 yards

In front of 81 million television viewers, the largest audience ever to watch a sporting event, the Raiders won their first Super Bowl title. Clarence Davis rushed for 137 yards, Fred Biletnikoff made four key receptions, and the defense came up big for the victors. Oakland built a 16-0 halftime lead – on Errol Mann's 24-yard field goal, a 1-yard TD pass from Ken Stabler to Dave Casper, and Pete Banaszak's 1-yard scoring run. After the Vikings cut the deficit to 19-7, a pair of fourth-quarter interceptions clinched the championship for the Raiders. One set up Banaszak's second touchdown run, while the other resulted in cornerback Willie Brown's 75-yard interception return for a score.

XII

January 15, 1978
Superdome | New Orleans
Attendance: 75,583

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Dallas	10	3	7	7	27
Denver	0	0	10	0	10

MVPs: Randy White (DT) and Harvey Martin (DE), Dallas
Leaders of a defense that had four sacks and allowed just 156 total yards

Super Bowl TV viewership exceeded 100 million for the first time, and those fans saw the Cowboys turn two interceptions into 10 points and Efren Herrera add a 35-yard field goal for a 13-0 halftime lead. Dallas then tacked on two second-half TDs, the first on Butch Johnson's spectacular diving catch in the end zone and the other when running back Robert Newhouse tossed a 29-yard pass to Golden Richards. The Cowboys' defense forced eight turnovers in the win.

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Bruce Bennett/Getty Images

Joe Montana enjoyed the thrill of Super Bowl victory four times and was selected the game's MVP on three occasions.

XIII

January 21, 1979
Orange Bowl | Miami
Attendance: 79,484

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Pittsburgh	7	14	0	14	35
Dallas	7	7	3	14	31

MVP: Terry Bradshaw (QB), Pittsburgh
17 of 30 passing, 318 yards, 4 TDs

Terry Bradshaw's four touchdown passes led the Steelers, who became the first team to win three Super Bowls. The first two scoring tosses went to John Stallworth, and the third, with 26 seconds remaining in the second quarter, was to Rocky Bleier for a 21-14 halftime lead. The Steelers then broke things open with TDs 19 seconds apart midway through the final quarter – Franco Harris rambled 22 yards for a score, and after Dennis Winston recovered a fumble on the ensuing kickoff, Bradshaw fired an 18-yard strike to Lynn Swann.

XIV

January 20, 1980
Rose Bowl | Pasadena
Attendance: 103,985

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
L.A. Rams	7	6	6	0	19
Pittsburgh	3	7	7	14	31

MVP: Terry Bradshaw (QB), Pittsburgh
14 of 21 passing, 309 yards, 2 TDs

Trailing 13-10 at halftime, the Steelers rallied to win their fourth Super Bowl crown in six years. They briefly moved ahead in the third quarter when Terry Bradshaw hit Lynn Swann on a 47-yard TD pass, but the Rams responded on their next possession with Lawrence McCutcheon throwing a halfback option touchdown to Ron Smith. The Steelers would finally take the lead for good in the fourth quarter on Bradshaw's 73-yard touchdown throw to John Stallworth. After stopping an L.A. threat with a Jack Lambert interception, they sealed the verdict on Franco Harris' 1-yard TD run.

XV

January 25, 1981
Superdome | New Orleans
Attendance: 76,135

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Oakland	14	0	10	3	27
Philadelphia	0	3	0	7	10

MVP: Jim Plunkett (QB), Oakland
13 of 21 passing, 261 yards, 3 TDs

Jim Plunkett passed for three touchdowns, including an 80-yard strike to Kenny King late in the first quarter, as the Raiders became the first wild card team to win the Super Bowl. Linebacker Rod Martin set up Oakland's first touchdown with an interception, one of a Super Bowl-record three he had in the game, while King's grab marked the longest play in Super Bowl history at the time. Oakland's Mark van Eeghen led all rushers with 75 yards, while teammate Cliff Branch had five receptions for 67 yards, including two catches that went for touchdowns.

XVI

January 24, 1982
Silverdome | Pontiac
Attendance: 81,270

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
San Francisco	7	13	0	6	26
Cincinnati	0	0	7	14	21

MVP: Joe Montana (QB), San Fran.
14 of 22 passing, 157 yards, 1 TD

Ray Wersching's Super Bowl record-tying four field goals and Joe Montana's controlled passing lifted the 49ers to their first NFL crown. San Francisco owned a 20-0 halftime lead thanks to Montana's 1-yard TD run, Earl Cooper's 11-yard scoring catch, and 22- and 26-yard field goals from Wersching. The Bengals closed the gap on Ken Anderson's 5-yard run and Dan Ross' 4-yard TD grab, but the 49ers kicker padded the lead with two fourth-quarter field goals. Cincinnati outgained San Francisco, 356-275, marking the first time in Super Bowl history that the losing team had more total yards.

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XVII

January 30, 1983
Rose Bowl | Pasadena
Attendance: 103,667

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Miami	7	10	0	0	17
Washington	0	10	3	14	27

MVP: John Riggins (RB), Wash.
38 carries, 166 yards, 1 TD

John Riggins topped 100 rushing yards for the fourth straight playoff game, part of a 276-yard ground effort for Washington, which won its first NFL title since 1942. The Dolphins held a 17-10 halftime lead, but wouldn't score again. Mark Moseley's short field goal pulled Washington within three, and Riggins moved his team ahead when he rambled 43 yards on a fourth-and-1 play early in the fourth quarter. Charlie Brown's 6-yard TD catch with 1:55 left closed out the scoring. The Dolphins managed only 176 total yards of offense, and just 34 after intermission.

XVIII

January 22, 1984
Tampa Stadium | Tampa
Attendance: 72,920

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Washington	0	3	6	0	9
L.A. Raiders	7	14	14	3	38

MVP: Marcus Allen (RB), L.A. Raiders
20 carries, 191 yards, 2 TDs

Derrick Jensen's end-zone recovery of a punt he blocked – giving the Raiders a 7-0 lead less than five minutes into the game – put his team on course for a one-sided victory. Two key plays sealed Washington's fate. With just seven seconds left in the first half, Raiders linebacker Jack Squirek intercepted a pass at the Washington 5-yard line that he ran in for a touchdown to give Los Angeles a 21-3 lead. Then, on the final play of the third quarter, game MVP Marcus Allen darted 74 yards for a backbreaking touchdown.

The Raiders' Marcus Allen erupted for 191 rushing yards, including a 74-yard TD, in Super Bowl XVIII.

Manny Rubio/USA TODAY Sports

XIX

January 20, 1985
Stanford Stadium | Stanford
Attendance: 84,059

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Miami	10	6	0	0	16
San Francisco	7	21	10	0	38

MVP: Joe Montana (QB), San Fran.
24 of 35 passing, 331 yards, 3 TDs

The 49ers racked up 537 net yards as Joe Montana got the best of Dan Marino in this battle of future Hall of Fame QBs. Roger Craig became the first player to score three TDs in a Super Bowl game, one of those on an 8-yard TD reception that gave the 49ers a lead they would never relinquish. He added a short touchdown run before halftime and would close out San Francisco's scoring with a 16-yard reception from Montana. Craig finished with 58 yards rushing and caught seven passes for another 77 yards. The 49ers also held a 37:11 to 22:49 time of possession advantage over the Dolphins.

XX

January 26, 1986
Superdome | New Orleans
Attendance: 73,818

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Chicago	13	10	21	2	46
New England	3	0	0	7	10

MVP: Richard Dent (DE), Chicago
1.5 sacks, part of defense that allowed 7 rushing yards

In a dominating display from start to finish, the Bears' league-leading defense recorded seven sacks and limited the Patriots to just 7 rushing yards. Chicago yielded an early field goal, but then scored the game's next 44 points. QB Jim McMahon and FB Matt Suhey had scoring runs and Kevin Butler kicked three field goals to give the Bears a 23-3 halftime lead. After forcing a Patriots punt to start the second half, Chicago marched 96 yards for another TD to put the game out of reach. Bears RB Walter Payton rushed for 61 yards, while Richard Dent became just the fifth defender to be named Super Bowl MVP.

Jim McMahon threw for 256 yards and ran for a pair of touchdowns in the Bears' Super Bowl XX win.

Getty Images

George Rose/Getty Images

Joe Morris (20) and Phil Simms (11) sparked the Giants' Super Bowl XXI triumph, the team's first league championship in 30 years.

XXI

January 25, 1987
Rose Bowl | Pasadena
Attendance: 101,063

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Denver	10	0	0	10	20
N.Y. Giants	7	2	17	13	39

MVP: Phil Simms (QB), N.Y. Giants
22 of 25 passing, 268 yards, 3 TDs

Buoyed by a big defensive stand in the second quarter, the Giants captured their first NFL title since 1956. The Broncos, already leading by a 10-7 score, had a first down at the New York 1-yard line, but were stymied on three running plays and then missed a short field goal attempt. The Giants would take command in the third quarter en route to a 30-point second half – scoring four touchdowns and a field goal on their first five possessions after intermission – and moved in front for good on Mark Bavaro's 13-yard TD reception. Phil Simms deftly managed the game for the victors, setting Super Bowl records for completion percentage (88.0) and passer rating (150.92).

XXII

January 31, 1988
Jack Murphy Stadium | San Diego
Attendance: 73,302

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Washington	0	35	0	7	42
Denver	10	0	0	0	10

MVP: Doug Williams (QB), Wash.
18 of 29 passing, 340 yards, 4 TDs

Washington enjoyed a record-setting second quarter en route to victory. Trailing 10-0, Washington scored touchdowns on five straight possessions – establishing an NFL postseason mark for most points in a quarter (35). QB Doug Williams led the way by passing for four TDs, including 80- and 50-yard bombs to Ricky Sanders, and the five scores required only 18 total plays and 5:47 in possession. Timmy Smith amassed a Super Bowl-record 204 rushing yards (a mark that still stands), Barry Wilburn had two of Washington's three interceptions, and Alvin Walton recorded two of the team's five sacks.

XXIII

January 22, 1989
Joe Robbie Stadium | Miami
Attendance: 75,129

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Cincinnati	0	3	10	3	16
San Francisco	3	0	3	14	20

MVP: Jerry Rice (WR), San Fran.
11 receptions, 215 yards, 1 TD

By scoring on one of the most famous and clutch drives in league history, the 49ers became the first NFC team to win three Super Bowls. Cincinnati had taken a 16-13 lead on Jim Breech's 40-yard field goal with 3:20 remaining, but Joe Montana calmly drove San Francisco 92 yards over 11 plays, culminating with his 10-yard touchdown pass to John Taylor with just 34 seconds remaining. It was Taylor's lone catch of the game. Montana completed 23 of 36 passes for 357 yards, helping San Francisco post a 453 to 229 advantage in total yards.

XXIV

January 28, 1990
Superdome | New Orleans
Attendance: 72,919

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
San Francisco	13	14	14	14	55
Denver	3	0	7	0	10

MVP: Joe Montana (QB), San Fran.
22 of 29 passing, 297 yards, 5 TDs

The 49ers coasted to victory while setting a Super Bowl record for points that still stands. They scored touchdowns on four of their six first-half possessions to take a 27-3 lead at intermission, then cemented their advantage with interceptions by Michael Walter and Chet Brooks to end Denver's first two drives of the second half. Joe Montana was named Super Bowl MVP for a then-record third time, with his favorite target being Jerry Rice, who caught seven passes for 148 yards and three touchdowns. The 49ers' dominance extended to first downs (28 to 12), net yards (461 to 167), and time of possession (39:31 to 20:29).

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Paul Spinelli/AP Images

The duo of Michael Irvin (88) and Emmitt Smith (22) powered the Cowboys' offense during the team's run of three Super Bowl titles in the 1990s.

XXV

January 27, 1991
Tampa Stadium | Tampa
Attendance: 73,813

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Buffalo	3	9	0	7	19
N.Y. Giants	3	7	7	3	20

MVP: Ottis Anderson (RB), N.Y. Giants
102 rushing yards, 1 TD; 5 receptions

Successfully employing a ball-control offense that saw them maintain possession for more than 40 minutes, the Giants edged the high-powered Bills. Fourteen of New York's 73 plays came on its opening drive of the third quarter, which consumed a Super Bowl-record 9:29 and ended with Ottis Anderson's 1-yard touchdown run. A Thurman Thomas TD run put Buffalo back in front, but Matt Bahr gave New York the lead for good with his 21-yard field goal midway through the fourth quarter. Giants QB Jeff Hostetler was efficient in victory, completing 20 of 32 passes for 222 yards, including a 14-yard TD to Stephen Baker in the second quarter.

XXVI

January 26, 1992
Metrodome | Minneapolis
Attendance: 63,130

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Washington	0	17	14	6	37
Buffalo	0	0	10	14	24

MVP: Mark Rypien (QB), Wash.
18 of 33 passing, 292 yards, 2 TDs

After Buffalo had shaved 10 points off a 24-0 deficit, Mark Rypien restored order with his 30-yard TD pass to Gary Clark that propelled Washington to its third Super Bowl win in 10 years – all of them under coach Joe Gibbs but each with a different quarterback. Washington held a 17-0 halftime lead and quickly extended it on Gerald Riggs' short scoring run that was set up by a Kurt Gouveia interception. It was one of four pickoffs by the team's defense. Clark finished with seven catches for 114 yards and Art Monk added seven for 113 yards for the victors, who amassed 417 yards of total offense.

XXVII

January 31, 1993
Rose Bowl | Pasadena
Attendance: 98,374

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Buffalo	7	3	7	0	17
Dallas	14	14	3	21	52

MVP: Troy Aikman (QB), Dallas
22 of 30 passing, 273 yards, 4 TDs

Troy Aikman threw four touchdown passes, Emmitt Smith rushed for 108 yards, and the Cowboys' defense forced nine turnovers – that were converted into 35 points – as Dallas coasted to victory. Two of those turnovers helped the Cowboys take the lead for good late in the opening quarter. First, Dallas safety James Washington intercepted a pass that he returned to the Bills 47, setting up Aikman's 23-yard TD throw to Jay Novacek. On the next play from scrimmage, a sack by the Cowboys' Charles Haley forced a fumble that teammate Jimmie Jones scooped up and ran 2 yards for another score.

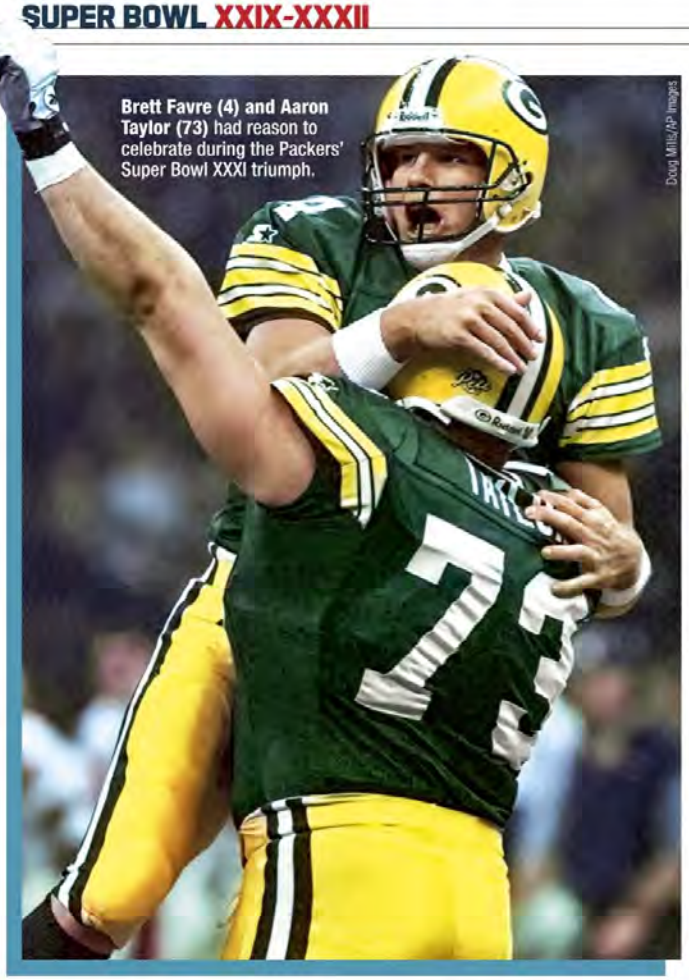
XXVIII

January 30, 1994
Georgia Dome | Atlanta
Attendance: 72,817

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Dallas	6	0	14	10	30
Buffalo	3	10	0	0	13

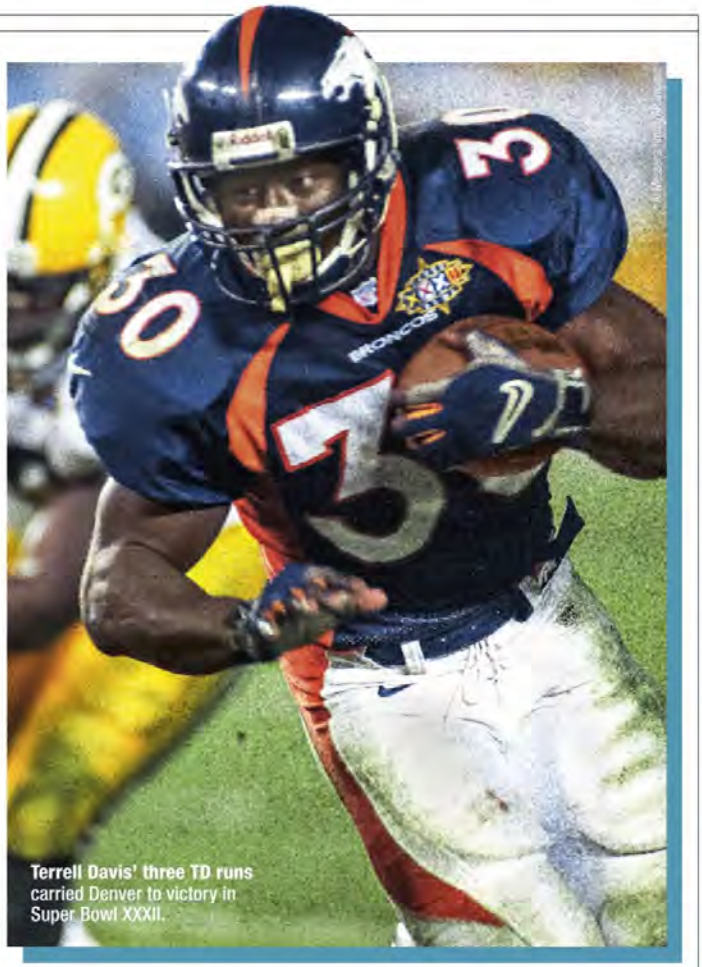
MVP: Emmitt Smith (RB), Dallas
30 carries, 132 yards, 2 TDs

The Cowboys became the first team begin the season 0-2 and go on to win the Super Bowl, and the fifth team to capture back-to-back Super Bowl titles. A big defensive play and Emmitt Smith's two TD runs helped the Cowboys erase a 13-6 halftime deficit. Just 55 seconds after intermission, safety James Washington recovered a fumble and weaved his way 46 yards for a touchdown to tie the game. After the Bills punted on their next possession, Smith took over, carrying seven times for 61 yards on a march that ended with his 15-yard scoring jaunt to put Dallas ahead for good. Washington added a fourth-quarter interception that led to another Smith touchdown run.



Brett Favre (4) and Aaron Taylor (73) had reason to celebrate during the Packers' Super Bowl XXXI triumph.

Doug Mills/AP Images



Terrell Davis' three TD runs carried Denver to victory in Super Bowl XXXII.

XXIX

January 29, 1995
Joe Robbie Stadium | Miami
Attendance: 74,107

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
San Diego	7	3	8	8	26
San Francisco	14	14	14	7	49

MVP: Steve Young (QB), San Fran. 24 of 36 passing, 325 yards, 6 TDs

Steve Young passed for a Super Bowl-record six TDs as the 49ers topped the Chargers to become the first team to win five Super Bowls. The QB, who directed an explosive offense that generated seven touchdowns, 28 first downs, and 455 total yards, wasted little time getting his team on the scoreboard. He fired a 44-yard touchdown throw to Jerry Rice only three plays and 1:24 into the game, and made it 14-0 with a 51-yard pass to Rickey Watters on the 49ers' next possession. Both Rice and Watters scored three times in the win, and the 75 combined points established another Super Bowl record that still stands.

XXX

January 28, 1996
Sun Devil Stadium | Tempe
Attendance: 76,347

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Dallas	10	3	7	7	27
Pittsburgh	0	7	0	10	17

MVP: Larry Brown (CB), Dallas 2 interceptions, both leading to Cowboys touchdowns

Cornerback Larry Brown's two interceptions led to 14 second-half points, lifting the Cowboys to their third Super Bowl victory in four seasons and fifth title overall. Dallas scored on each of its first three possessions, taking a 13-0 lead behind Troy Aikman's 3-yard TD pass to Jay Novacek and two Chris Boniol field goals. The Steelers managed to stay close, pulling within 13-7 and then 20-17, but Brown's heroics kept Dallas ahead. Both of his pickoffs set up short scoring runs by Emmitt Smith, the second with just 3:43 remaining in the game.

XXXI

January 26, 1997
Superdome | New Orleans
Attendance: 72,301

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
New England	14	0	7	0	21
Green Bay	10	17	8	0	35

MVP: Desmond Howard (KR-PR), Green Bay, 244 return yards, 99-yard kickoff return for TD

The NFC's Super Bowl win streak reached 13 games, thanks to big plays from Brett Favre and Desmond Howard that fueled the Packers. Favre threw for two touchdowns and ran for a third, while Howard's 99-yard kickoff-return TD in the third quarter stemmed New England's momentum. On Green Bay's second play from scrimmage, Favre hit Andre Rison for a 54-yard touchdown, and he later connected with Antonio Freeman on an 81-yard strike. But it wasn't until Howard's return late in the third quarter – on the heels of Curtis Martin's 18-yard rushing TD – that the Packers' lead was safe.

XXXII

January 25, 1998
Qualcomm Stadium | San Diego
Attendance: 68,912

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Green Bay	7	7	3	7	24
Denver	7	10	7	7	31

MVP: Terrell Davis (RB), Denver 30 carries, 157 yards, 3 TDs

Terrell Davis rushed for 157 yards and a Super Bowl-record three touchdowns to lead the Broncos to their first NFL title and snap the NFC's streak of Super Bowl victories at 13. With the game knotted, 24-24, and just 3:27 left in regulation, the Broncos took over at the Packers 49. Davis rushed for 2 yards, and a 15-yard facemask penalty moved the ball to the Packers 32. Three plays later, Davis' 17-yard run brought the ball to the 1, and after a timeout, he waltzed into the end zone for the go-ahead score. Green Bay drove to the Broncos 31 in the waning seconds, but John Mobley knocked away Brett Favre's fourth-down pass to preserve the victory.

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The Rams' Jeff Zgonina makes the call after teammate Mike Jones tackled Kevin Dyson just shy of the goal line to preserve victory in Super Bowl XXXIV.

John Biever/Getty Images

XXXIII

January 31, 1999
Pro Player Stadium | Miami
Attendance: 74,803

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Denver	7	10	0	17	34
Atlanta	3	3	0	13	19

MVP: John Elway (QB), Denver
18 of 29 passing, 336 yards, 1 TD

Playing in his final game, John Elway shined while leading the Broncos to their second consecutive Super Bowl victory, the first AFC team to achieve that feat since the Steelers 19 years earlier. Denver took the lead early, with Elway's 41-yard pass to Rod Smith setting up Howard Griffith's short TD run. Elway then fired an 80-yard scoring strike to Smith to put the Broncos ahead 17-3. In the second half, Darrien Gordon dashed Atlanta's comeback hopes with interceptions on consecutive possessions that led to Denver touchdowns, the second of those a 3-yard Elway run making it 31-6.

XXXIV

January 30, 2000
Georgia Dome | Atlanta
Attendance: 72,625

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
St. Louis	3	6	7	7	23
Tennessee	0	0	6	10	16

MVP: Kurt Warner (QB), St. Louis
24 of 45 passing, 414 yards, 2 TDs

Mike Jones tackled the Titans' Kevin Dyson at the 1-yard line as time expired, securing the Rams' first Super Bowl title. For coach Dick Vermeil, the win came 19 years after he brought the Eagles to the Super Bowl, marking the longest stretch between Super Bowl appearances by a coach. St. Louis reached the red zone on each of its first six possessions, but could muster just three field goals and one touchdown. The Titans then rallied with two long TD drives and an Al Del Greco field goal to tie the game late in the fourth quarter. It was quickly untied on the next play from scrimmage, when Kurt Warner fired a 73-yard touchdown pass to Isaac Bruce. Tennessee then drove deep into Rams territory, only to come up empty when Jones wrapped up Dyson shy of the goal line.

XXXV

January 28, 2001
Raymond James Stadium | Tampa
Attendance: 71,921

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Baltimore	7	3	14	10	34
N.Y. Giants	0	0	7	0	7

MVP: Ray Lewis (LB), Baltimore
star of a defense that allowed just 152 total yards

The Ravens' defense led the way by permitting just 152 yards, forcing five turnovers, recording four sacks, and not allowing an offensive touchdown as the franchise posted its first Super Bowl victory. There were 21 points scored in a dizzying 36-second span of the third quarter, starting when Baltimore's Duane Starks returned an interception 49 yards for a TD and a 17-0 Ravens lead. The Giants' Ron Dixon brought back the ensuing kickoff 97 yards for a score, but Jermaine Lewis matched it with a kickoff-return TD of his own. The Giants managed just one first down on their final four possessions.

XXXVI

February 3, 2002
Superdome | New Orleans
Attendance: 72,922

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
St. Louis	3	0	0	14	17
New England	0	14	3	3	20

MVP: Tom Brady (QB), New England
16 of 27 passing, 145 yards, 1 TD

Adam Vinatieri's 48-yard field goal proved the difference as the Patriots prevailed in the first Super Bowl in which the winning points were scored on the final play. Underdog New England had built a 17-3 lead, but the Rams tied things up with two fourth-quarter touchdowns – the second with just 1:30 to go – before Patriots QB Tom Brady positioned his team for the game-winning kick. He completed five passes on the drive, three of those to J.R. Redmond and another a 23-yarder to Troy Brown that brought the ball into St. Louis territory.

Keenan McCardell caught two passes in Super Bowl XXXVII, both for touchdowns, as the Buccaneers sailed to victory.

Al Bello/Getty Images

XXXVII

January 26, 2003
Qualcomm Stadium | San Diego
Attendance: 67,603

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Oakland	3	0	6	12	21
Tampa Bay	3	17	14	14	48

MVP: Dexter Jackson (S), Tampa Bay
2 of team's 5 interceptions

Tampa Bay intercepted five Raiders passes, three that were returned for touchdowns, on its way to the franchise's first Super Bowl title. After an early field goal, Oakland managed just two first downs on its next nine possessions while the Buccaneers rolled to 34 straight points. Keenan McCardell ignited a decisive sequence, catching TD passes on back-to-back drives that put his team ahead, 27-3. Dwight Smith brought back pickoffs of 44 and 50 yards for scores, and Derrick Brooks had a 44-yarder for a touchdown after the Raiders narrowed the deficit to 34-21 in the fourth quarter. The Bucs' defense limited Oakland to just 269 total yards – 19 on the ground –.and Tampa Bay enjoyed a 37:14 to 22:46 advantage in time of possession.

XXXVIII

February 1, 2004
Reliant Stadium | Houston
Attendance: 71,525

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Carolina	0	10	0	19	29
New England	0	14	0	18	32

MVP: Tom Brady (QB), New England
32 of 48 passing, 354 yards, 3 TDs

Adam Vinatieri's 41-yard field goal with four seconds to play lifted New England to its second championship in three years. While it took a Super Bowl-record 26 minutes, 55 seconds for the first points to be scored, the teams eventually combined for 868 total yards – 481 by the Patriots – and had the highest-scoring fourth quarter (37 points) in Super Bowl history. Carolina briefly moved in front on an 85-yard Muhsin Muhammad TD reception and later tied the game on Ricky Proehl's 12-yard scoring catch with 1:08 remaining. But Tom Brady answered by driving the Patriots into field goal range, aided by Deion Branch's clutch 17-yard reception.

XXXIX

February 6, 2005
Alltel Stadium | Jacksonville
Attendance: 78,125

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
New England	0	7	7	10	24
Philadelphia	0	7	7	7	21

MVP: Deion Branch (WR), New Eng.
11 receptions, 133 yards

Behind a defense that forced four turnovers – including two fourth-quarter interceptions – the Patriots joined the Cowboys as the only teams to win three Super Bowls in a span of four seasons. New England took the lead for good early in the fourth quarter on a drive sparked by Kevin Faulk, who caught screen passes of 13 and 14 yards and added a 12-yard run. Corey Dillon capped the possession with his 2-yard touchdown run, and after Adam Vinatieri's 22-yard field goal made it 24-14, Tedy Bruschi and Rodney Harrison stepped up with interceptions that sealed the outcome.

XL

February 5, 2006
Ford Field | Detroit
Attendance: 68,206

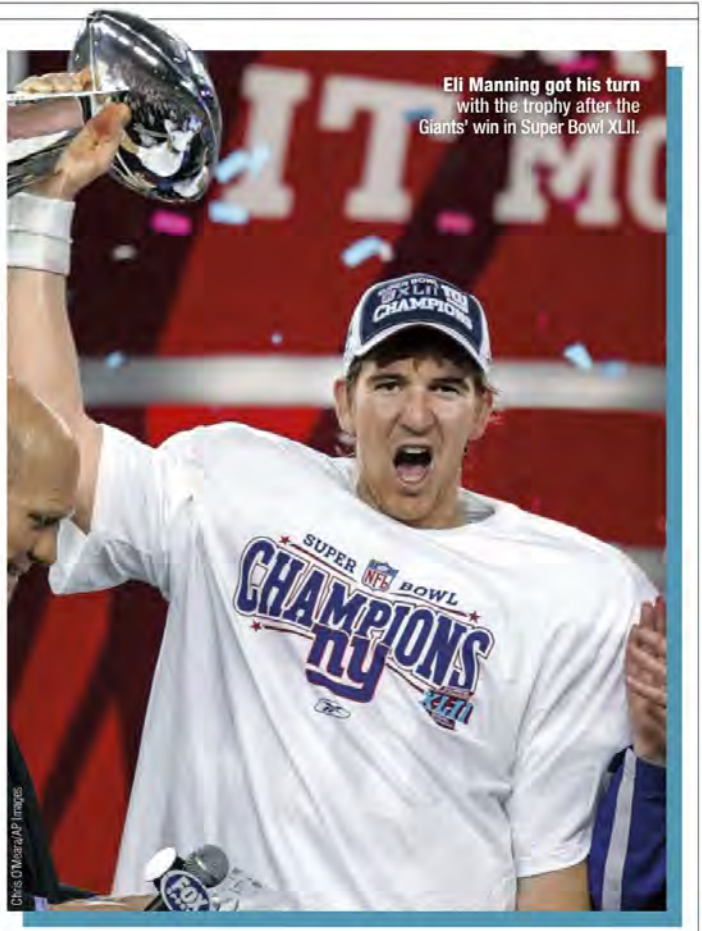
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Seattle	3	0	7	0	10
Pittsburgh	0	7	7	7	21

MVP: Hines Ward (WR), Pittsburgh
5 receptions, 123 yards, 1 TD

The Steelers finally earned their "one for the thumb," becoming the first AFC team to win five Super Bowls. Holding a tenuous 14-10 fourth-quarter lead, the game's key sequence came when cornerback Ike Taylor picked off a pass to stop a Seahawks threat. Pittsburgh quickly cashed in when Antwaan Randle El, a quarterback in college, took a handoff, sprinted right, then stopped and fired a 43-yard strike to Hines Ward for the first Super Bowl TD pass thrown by a wide receiver. In the third quarter, the Steelers' Willie Parker burst free for a Super Bowl-record 75-yard touchdown run.

Peyton Manning raises the Lombardi Trophy alongside coach Tony Dungy after the Colts won Super Bowl XLI.

Chris O'Meara/AP Images



Eli Manning got his turn with the trophy after the Giants' win in Super Bowl XLII.

Chris O'Meara/AP Images

XLI

February 4, 2007
Dolphin Stadium | Miami
Attendance: 74,512

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Indianapolis	6	10	6	7	29
Chicago	14	0	3	0	17

MVP: Peyton Manning (QB), Ind.
25 of 38 passing, 247 yards, 1 TD

A wet and wild night of Super Bowl firsts brought Tony Dungy, Peyton Manning, and the Colts to the top of the NFL. Dungy became the first African American head coach to win the Super Bowl while directing the franchise to its first crown since relocating to Indianapolis in 1984. It was also the first Super Bowl title for Manning, whose career saw him set league marks for completions, passing yards, and passing TDs. The game also marked the first time the opening kickoff was run back for a touchdown, accomplished when the Bears' Devin Hester sped 92 yards to give his team the early lead.

XLII

February 3, 2008
Univ. of Phoenix Stadium | Glendale
Attendance: 71,101

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
N.Y. Giants	3	0	0	14	17
New England	0	7	0	7	14

MVP: Eli Manning (QB), N.Y. Giants
19 of 34 passing, 255 yards, 2 TDs

The Giants became the first NFC wild card team to win the Super Bowl, an achievement made possible by a relentless defense and David Tyree's brilliant 32-yard catch that set up the go-ahead touchdown. Plaxico Burress capped the winning drive with his 13-yard TD grab with 35 seconds to play, shocking a Patriots squad that entered the game 18-0 and had taken the lead just minutes earlier on Randy Moss' 6-yard touchdown reception. Michael Strahan, playing his final game, keyed a New York defense that produced five sacks, while the Giants' ball-control approach on offense included an opening drive that lasted a Super Bowl-record 9 minutes, 59 seconds.

XLIII

February 1, 2009
Raymond James Stadium | Tampa
Attendance: 70,774

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Pittsburgh	3	14	3	7	27
Arizona	0	7	0	16	23

MVP: Santonio Holmes (WR), Pitt.
9 receptions, 131 yards, 1 TD

In a game with a long list of clutch plays, the Steelers saved the biggest for last. The Cardinals nearly pulled off what would have been a historic comeback, scoring 16 points in a frenzied fourth quarter and taking the lead on Larry Fitzgerald's 64-yard touchdown catch with 2:37 to play. Pittsburgh answered with a 78-yard drive, winning the game on Ben Roethlisberger's 6-yard scoring pass to Santonio Holmes. The game also saw the Steelers' James Harrison return an interception 100 yards for a TD on the final play before halftime.

XLIV

February 7, 2010
Sun Life Stadium | Miami
Attendance: 74,059

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
New Orleans	0	6	10	15	31
Indianapolis	10	0	7	0	17

MVP: Drew Brees (QB), New Orleans
32 of 39 passing, 288 yards, 2 TDs

Lifting the spirits of a community recovering from Hurricane Katrina, the Saints capped a memorable season by edging the Colts for their first Super Bowl title. They did it with a daring play call to start the second half – an onside kick that was recovered by Chris Reis and set up a six-play drive that Drew Brees finished with a 16-yard TD pass to Pierre Thomas. Jeremy Shockey's fourth-quarter scoring grab moved New Orleans in front to stay, and Tracy Porter put the game away with his 74-yard interception-return touchdown with 3:12 remaining.

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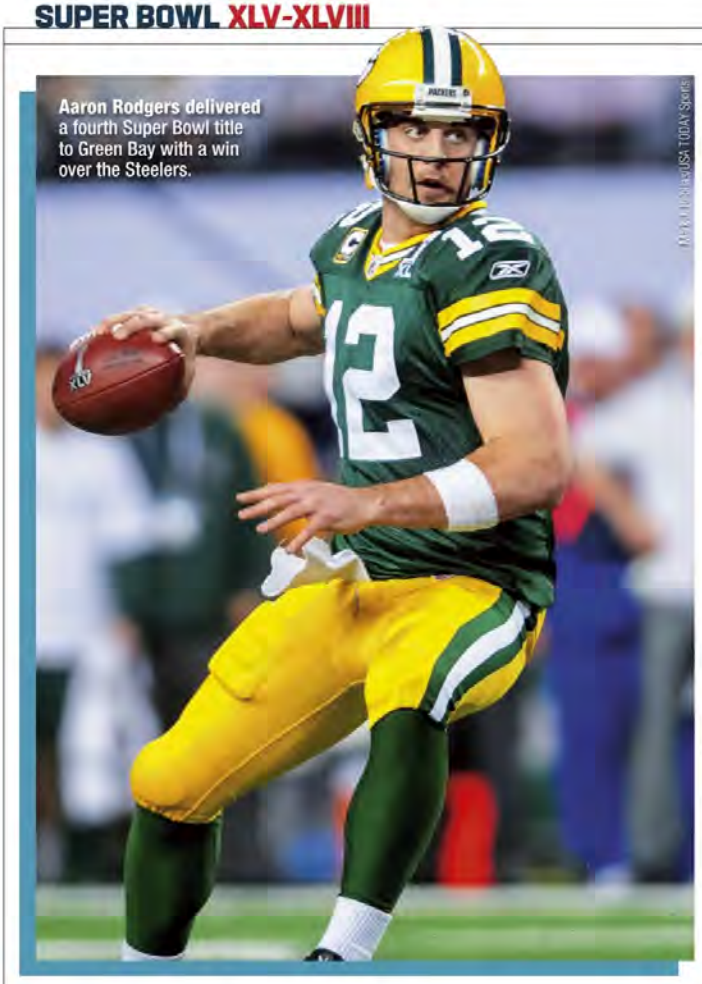

Aaron Rodgers delivered a fourth Super Bowl title to Green Bay with a win over the Steelers.

Mark J. Rebilas/USA TODAY Sports

Ray Lewis completed his career by winning his second Super Bowl title.

Chris Graythen/Getty Images

XLV

February 6, 2011
Cowboys Stadium | Arlington
Attendance: 91,060

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Pittsburgh	0	10	7	8	25
Green Bay	14	7	0	10	31

MVP: Aaron Rodgers (QB), Green Bay
24 of 39 passing, 304 yards, 3 TDs

Aaron Rodgers threw three TD passes and Nick Collins returned an interception for another score, sparking the Packers to their fourth Super Bowl title. The Steelers had trailed, 21-3, but tallied two touchdowns to get close and were on the move again early in the fourth quarter. That's when Green Bay linebacker Clay Matthews stripped the ball from running back Rashard Mendenhall at the Packers 33 and teammate Desmond Bishop recovered. Rodgers then marched Green Bay to a quick TD that extended his team's lead to 28-17.

XLVI

February 5, 2012
Lucas Oil Stadium | Indianapolis
Attendance: 68,658

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
N.Y. Giants	9	0	6	6	21
New England	0	10	7	0	17

MVP: Eli Manning (QB), N.Y. Giants
30 of 40 passing, 296 yards, 1 TD

In the first Super Bowl to feature two starting quarterbacks who previously won the big game's MVP award, Eli Manning and the Giants edged Tom Brady and the Patriots, scoring a late TD for the victory. Manning set a record by opening a Super Bowl with nine consecutive completions; Brady later put together a run of 16 completions in a row, breaking another Super Bowl mark. But with time counting down, Manning directed a nine-play, 88-yard drive that moved New York ahead to stay, capped when Ahmad Bradshaw ran for the winning touchdown with just under a minute to play.

XLVII

February 3, 2013
Mercedes-Benz Superdome | New Orleans
Attendance: 71,024

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Baltimore	7	14	7	6	34
San Francisco	3	3	17	8	31

MVP: Joe Flacco (QB), Baltimore
22 of 33 passing, 287 yards, 3 TDs

The Ravens built a big lead, then held on to hand the 49ers their first Super Bowl loss in six appearances. Joe Flacco threw three first-half touchdowns – capping a spectacular 11-TD, zero-interception postseason – and Jacoby Jones opened the second half with a Super Bowl-record 108-yard kickoff-return touchdown that put Baltimore ahead, 28-6. The 49ers rallied late, reaching the Ravens 5-yard line before being stopped on downs with under two minutes to play. Baltimore linebacker Ray Lewis added his name to the list of legends – John Elway, Jerome Bettis, and Michael Strahan among them – whose final game was a Super Bowl victory.

XLVIII

February 2, 2014
MetLife Stadium | East Rutherford
Attendance: 82,529

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Seattle	8	14	14	7	43
Denver	0	0	8	0	8

MVP: Malcolm Smith (LB), Seattle
9 tackles, 69-yard interception return for TD

In what was expected to be the first cold-weather Super Bowl – but instead kicked off in pleasant 49-degree conditions at MetLife Stadium – Seattle cruised past the Broncos. The game featured the quickest points to open a Super Bowl; the Seahawks scored on a safety just 12 seconds into the contest. More big plays followed. Seattle LB Malcolm Smith, the first defender in 11 years to be named the game's MVP, broke things open by bringing back a second-quarter interception 69 yards for a TD, and Percy Harvin returned the second-half kickoff 87 yards for another Seattle touchdown, making the score 29-0.

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funnyyoushouldask.tv

XLIX

February 1, 2015
Univ. of Phoenix Stadium | Glendale
Attendance: 70,288

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
New England	0	14	0	14	28
Seattle	0	14	10	0	24

MVP: Tom Brady (QB), New England
37 of 50 passing, 328 yards, 4 TDs

Tom Brady threw four touchdown passes, including the go-ahead score to Julian Edelman with 2:02 remaining, and Malcolm Butler intercepted a pass at the goal line with 20 seconds left to preserve the Patriots' fourth Super Bowl win. Brady's third TD throw was his 12th in the Super Bowl, breaking Joe Montana's career record. Still, Seattle nearly pulled off an improbable victory, moving deep into New England territory on Jermaine Kearse's acrobatic 33-yard catch, before Butler came up big two plays later, stepping in front of a pass for the game-saving interception. The Patriots became the first team to win the Super Bowl after trailing by double figures in the fourth quarter.

50

February 7, 2016
Levi's Stadium | San Francisco
Attendance: 71,088

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Carolina	0	7	0	3	10
Denver	10	3	3	8	24

MVP: Von Miller (LB), Denver
6 tackles, 2.5 sacks, 2 forced fumbles

Defense carried the day for the Broncos, who won their third Super Bowl title by flustering a Panthers offense that had scored an NFL-best 500 points during the regular season. Denver recorded seven sacks – equaling the Super Bowl record by a team – and linebacker Von Miller forced a pair of fumbles that led to the team's two TDs. The first was scooped up by teammate Malik Jackson in the end zone for a 10-0 lead; the second set up C.J. Anderson's short scoring run. T.J. Ward did his part, too, with seven tackles and one pass defensed. The victory was the 200th in Peyton Manning's career and made him the first starting QB to win Super Bowls with two different franchises.

Tom Brady added to his Super Bowl legacy by throwing two fourth-quarter TD passes in the Patriots' Super Bowl XLIX win.

Tom DiPace/AP Images

LI

February 5, 2017
NRG Stadium | Houston
Attendance: 70,807

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	F
New England	0	3	6	19	6	34
Atlanta	0	21	7	0	0	28

MVP: Tom Brady (QB), New England
43 of 62 passing, 466 yards, 2 TDs

New England staged the biggest comeback in Super Bowl history, rallying from a 25-point deficit late in the third quarter to prevail in overtime for the franchise's fifth championship. It would have been hard to imagine such an outcome after Matt Ryan's 6-yard touchdown pass to Tevin Coleman gave Atlanta a 28-3 lead, but Patriots QB Tom Brady – who became the first four-time Super Bowl MVP – made it happen. He threw TD passes to James White and Danny Amendola, Stephen Gostkowski kicked a 33-yard field goal, and a White touchdown run and a two-point conversion then tied it to cap a frantic final 17 minutes of regulation. White won the game with a 2-yard TD run on the first possession of overtime.

LII

February 4, 2018
U.S. Bank Stadium | Minneapolis
Attendance: 67,612

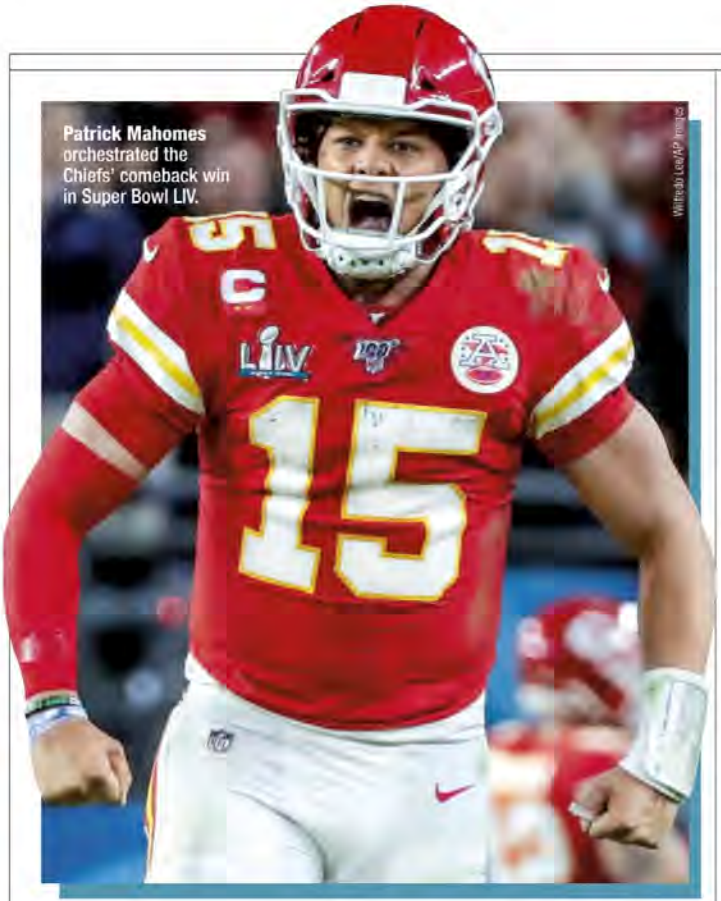
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
Philadelphia	9	13	7	12	41
New England	3	9	14	7	33

MVP: Nick Foles (QB), Philadelphia
28 of 43 passing, 373 yards, 3 TDs, 1 TD reception

Zach Ertz's TD catch with 2:21 remaining put the Eagles ahead, but it took a big defensive play by Brandon Graham and Derek Barnett to preserve the franchise's first Super Bowl victory. Graham strip-sacked QB Tom Brady on the Patriots' next possession and Barnett recovered the loose ball. The game featured 1,151 total yards, the most ever in an NFL game, and Brady threw for a Super Bowl-record 505 yards. MVP Nick Foles became the first player to both throw and catch a TD pass in the Super Bowl.

Nick Foles stepped up in Super Bowl LII to lift the Eagles to their first Super Bowl title.

Timothy Clary/Getty Images



Patrick Mahomes orchestrated the Chiefs' comeback win in Super Bowl LIV.

Wilfredo Lee/AP Images

LIII

February 3, 2019
Mercedes-Benz Stadium | Atlanta
Attendance: 70,081

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
New England	0	3	0	10	13
L.A. Rams	0	0	3	0	3

MVP: Julian Edelman (WR), New Eng. 10 receptions, 141 yards

On the heels of the highest-scoring season in NFL history, the Patriots and the Rams tangled in the lowest-scoring Super Bowl ever seen. New England prevailed to capture its sixth Super Bowl crown – all since the 2001 season – to tie the Steelers for the all-time record. Sony Michel accounted for the game's lone touchdown, a 2-yard run midway through the fourth quarter that snapped a 3-3 tie and came one play after QB Tom Brady lofted a perfect pass to Rob Gronkowski for a 29-yard gain. Stephen Gostkowski then added a 41-yard field goal with 1:12 remaining to provide New England with a late cushion. In between those two scores, the Rams marched to the Patriots 27-yard line, but their threat ended when Jared Goff's pass deep down the right side was picked off by Stephon Gilmore.

LIV

February 2, 2020
Hard Rock Stadium | Miami
Attendance: 62,417

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	F
San Francisco	3	7	10	0	20
Kansas City	7	3	0	21	31

MVP: Patrick Mahomes (QB), K.C. 26 of 42 passing, 286 yards, 2 TDs, 29 yards rushing, 1 TD

Kansas City erupted for three touchdowns in a span of 5:01 late in the fourth quarter to overtake the 49ers and win the franchise's first Super Bowl title in a half century. Patrick Mahomes threw TD passes to Travis Kelce and Damien Williams – the latter of which put the Chiefs ahead – and Williams added a 38-yard scoring run with 1:12 remaining to pad the lead. San Francisco had snapped a halftime tie with a 42-yard Robbie Gould field goal and Raheem Mostert's 1-yard TD run, before Kansas City, facing its third double-digit deficit of the postseason, rallied. Williams rushed for a game-high 104 yards and Tyreek Hill caught nine of Mahomes' 26 completions.

From 1920-1931, the NFL did not have postseason play, but a first-place tie in 1932 forced a "playoff," and its success led the league to adopt a championship game format a year later. The AFL began play in 1960, and from 1966-1969 (before the merger), the two leagues held separate title games prior to the Super Bowl.

NFL Champions

1920 Akron Pros
1921 Chicago Staleys
1922 Canton Bulldogs
1923 Canton Bulldogs
1924 Cleveland Bulldogs
1925 Chicago Cardinals
1926 Frankford Yellow Jackets
1927 New York Giants
1928 Providence Steam Roller
1929 Green Bay Packers
1930 Green Bay Packers
1931 Green Bay Packers

1932 @ Chicago Bears 9, Portsmouth Spartans 0
1933 @ Chicago Bears 23, New York Giants 21
1934 @ New York Giants 30, Chicago Bears 13
1935 @ Detroit Lions 26, New York Giants 7
1936* Green Bay Packers 21, Boston Braves 6
1937 Washington Redskins 28, @ Chicago Bears 21
1938 @ New York Giants 23, Green Bay Packers 17
1939 @ Green Bay Packers 27, New York Giants 0
1940 Chicago Bears 73, @ Washington Redskins 0
1941 @ Chicago Bears 37, New York Giants 9
1942 @ Washington Redskins 14, Chicago Bears 6
1943 @ Chicago Bears 41, Washington Redskins 21
1944 Green Bay Packers 14, @ New York Giants 7
1945 @ Cleveland Rams 15, Washington Redskins 14
1946 Chicago Bears 24, @ New York Giants 14
1947 @ Chicago Cardinals 28, Philadelphia Eagles 21
1948 @ Philadelphia Eagles 7, Chicago Cardinals 0
1949 Philadelphia Eagles 14, @ Los Angeles Rams 0
1950 @ Cleveland Browns 30, Los Angeles Rams 28
1951 @ Los Angeles Rams 24, Cleveland Browns 17
1952 Detroit Lions 17, @ Cleveland Browns 7
1953 @ Detroit Lions 17, Cleveland Browns 16
1954 @ Cleveland Browns 56, Detroit Lions 10
1955 Cleveland Browns 38, @ Los Angeles Rams 14
1956 @ New York Giants 47, Chicago Bears 7
1957 @ Detroit Lions 59, Cleveland Browns 14
1958 Baltimore Colts 23, @ New York Giants 17 (OT)
1959 @ Baltimore Colts 31, New York Giants 16
1960 @ Philadelphia Eagles 17, Green Bay Packers 13
1961 @ Green Bay Packers 37, New York Giants 0
1962 Green Bay Packers 16, @ New York Giants 7
1963 @ Chicago Bears 14, New York Giants 10
1964 @ Cleveland Browns 27, Baltimore Colts 0
1965 @ Green Bay Packers 23, Cleveland Browns 12
1966 Green Bay Packers 34, @ Dallas Cowboys 27
1967 @ Green Bay Packers 21, Dallas Cowboys 17
1968 Baltimore Colts 34, @ Cleveland Browns 0
1969 @ Minnesota Vikings 27, Cleveland Browns 7

AFL Champions

1960 @ Houston Oilers 24, Los Angeles Chargers 16
1961 Houston Oilers 10, @ San Diego Chargers 3
1962 Dallas Texans 20, @ Houston Oilers 17 (OT)
1963 @ San Diego Chargers 51, Boston Patriots 10
1964 @ Buffalo Bills 20, San Diego Chargers 7
1965 Buffalo Bills 23, @ San Diego Chargers 0
1966 Kansas City Chiefs 31, @ Buffalo Bills 7
1967 @ Oakland Raiders 40, Houston Oilers 7
1968 @ New York Jets 27, Oakland Raiders 23
1969 Kansas City Chiefs 17, @ Oakland Raiders 7

*Held at the Polo Grounds (New York, N.Y.)

The 1933 NFL Championship Game saw the Bears defeat the Giants at Chicago's Wrigley Field.

AP Images

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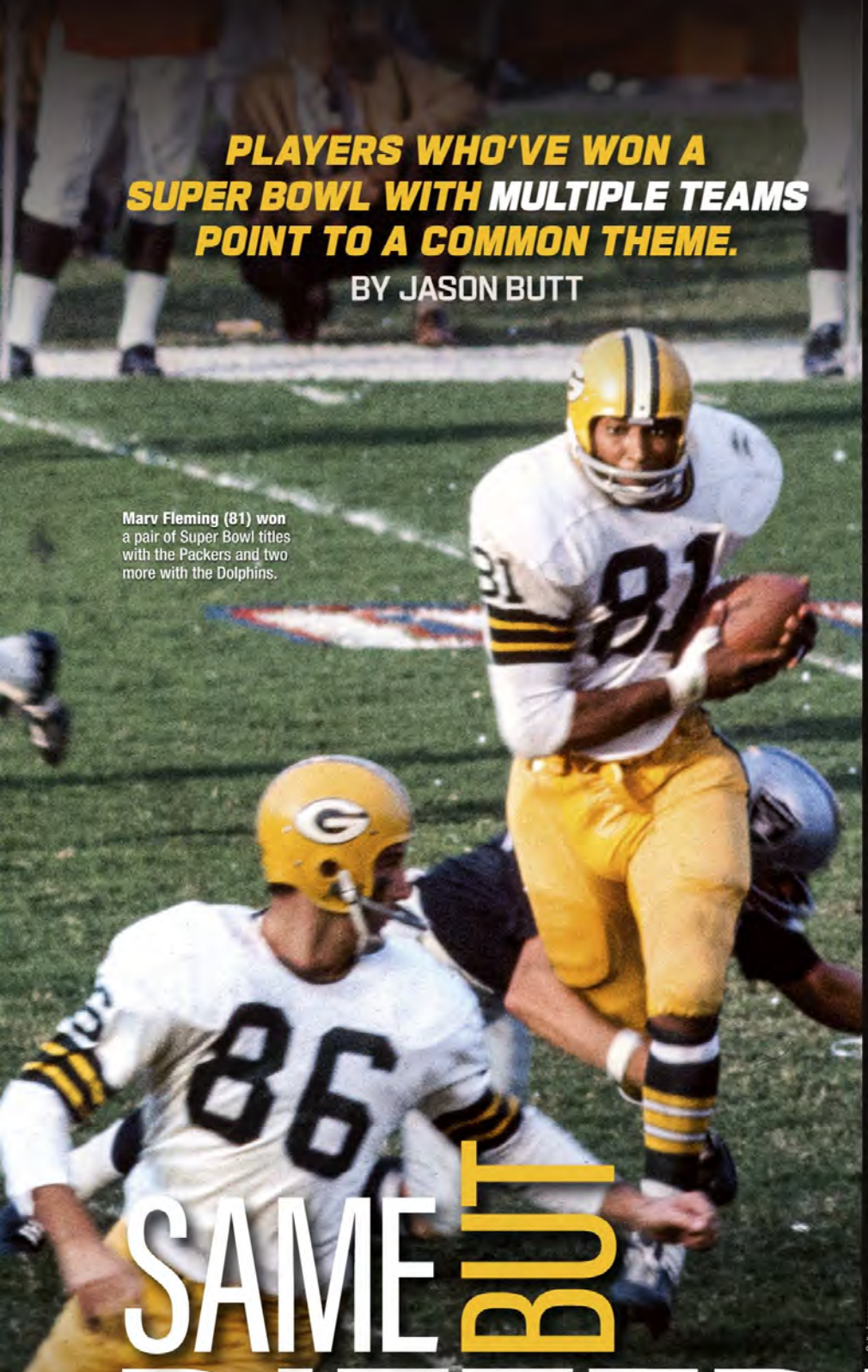

Marv Fleming (81) won a pair of Super Bowl titles with the Packers and two more with the Dolphins.

Getty Images

SAME BUT DIFFERENT

PLAYERS WHO'VE WON A SUPER BOWL WITH MULTIPLE TEAMS POINT TO A COMMON THEME.

BY JASON BUTT

WHEN HE JOINED THE GREEN BAY PACKERS following his selection in the 11th round of the 1963 NFL Draft, Marv Fleming learned a phrase that would stick with him throughout his pro career.

"Winning is a habit."

Those words were part of the lexicon of legendary Packers head coach Vince Lombardi, who instilled this mindset into each of the teams he led. It didn't matter who you were or where you came from. If you could play football, and if you were a good human being, you had a spot on the Packers. But you had to be willing to work, and you had to be willing to do whatever it took to win ball games.

Fleming loved Lombardi's coaching style. And with everyone on one accord and vying for a common goal – a world championship – it is easy for the tight end to look back and see why those Packers teams were so successful.

"If you could fit into the Packer family, he could use you," says Fleming, who in addition to his blocking skills caught 157 passes across 12 NFL seasons. "He was such a man that everybody respected and loved. He taught the right things. You'll never find another coach like him."

In seven years with the Packers, Fleming was part of teams that won three NFL titles and the first two Super Bowls. He notes that, like a lot of championship teams, they followed a reliable formula: They were well-coached, had a handful of star players, and the rest of the team was made up of role players who refused to lose. He also recalls the deep level of preparation those Packers teams displayed.

Leading into Super Bowl I, a 35-10 win over the Chiefs, Fleming said the game film showed Kansas City to be a talented and fast team. But on the field, it turned out that the Packers were well equipped for anything the Chiefs threw their way.

Malcolm Emmons/USA TODAY Sports

Paul Spinelli/AP Images

Players who bring Super Bowl experience to their new team are highly valued. Bill Curry (top left) appeared in three Super Bowls – one with the Packers and two with the Colts – in his first six NFL seasons. Charles Haley (No. 94, top right) and Bill Romanowski (right) are among the rare players to win multiple Super Bowl titles with different teams.

Al Messerschmidt/AP Images

"If you see two college teams going at it, you say, 'Wow, this is a great game, these guys are good,'" Fleming says. "But now they have to play against professionals, guys who have been around, guys who know how to play. That was the Green Bay Packers."

That mentality remained intact the following season. Fleming said once the team reconvened in the summer of 1967, getting back to the Super Bowl was the only thing on anyone's mind. The Packers returned and defeated the Oakland Raiders, 33-14, in Super Bowl II.

Fleming signed with the Miami Dolphins following the 1969 season and went on to play in three more Super Bowls, winning twice. That places Fleming in an exclusive group.

While more than four dozen players have earned one Super Bowl ring with two teams, Fleming is among just three to win multiple Super Bowls with different teams. The others are Charles Haley, who won Super Bowls XXIII and XXIV with the San Francisco 49ers and then went to the Dallas Cowboys and contributed to their Super Bowl XXVII and XXVIII victories; and Bill Romanowski, who was a teammate of Haley on those 49ers teams and then played with the Denver Broncos when they captured back-to-back titles in Super Bowls XXXII and XXXIII.

Matt Millen, meanwhile, is part of a club of one: He's the only player to win Super Bowl championships with three different teams. He was part of the Raiders' Super Bowl XV and XVIII wins, was with the 49ers for Super Bowl XXIV, and played for the Washington team that captured Super Bowl XXVI.

When Fleming joined the Dolphins, they weren't used to success. But they did have a new coach, Don Shula, who was previously with the Baltimore Colts, where he had seven consecutive winning seasons and took the team to Super Bowl III. The Shula-Fleming duo, along with some other key additions, helped instill a new mentality in South Florida.

"I like to think Coach Shula fell into a good thing," Fleming says. "He had talented players there, and he brought in a nucleus of players who had winning histories. It made it a lot easier for the other guys, the new guys, and the rookies to come in and see what it took to win a football game. It takes a team. You go in as a team, you play as a team, you live as a team."

"IT WAS THE TYPES OF HUMAN BEINGS WE HAD ON THE COACHING STAFF AND ON THE TEAM. WE HAD VERY DEMANDING COACHES. WE HAD GREAT LEADERS. BUT MOSTLY IT WAS A BUNCH OF GUYS WHO REFUSED TO LET EACH OTHER DOWN."

- BILL CURRY, ON SIMILARITIES BETWEEN HIS SUPER BOWL-WINNING PACKERS AND COLTS TEAMS

The Dolphins made the playoffs for the first time in 1970. The following season, they won the AFC title and reached Super Bowl VI, where they lost to the Cowboys. Fleming recalls many of the Dolphins players seemed excited just to be in the Super Bowl, but that loss proved a motivating force heading into what would be an undefeated 1972 season and a Super Bowl VII victory over Washington.

"I'd say it was the education of knowing what you have to do to go all the way," recalls

Fleming, who was also part of the Dolphins' Super Bowl VIII championship team that defeated the Minnesota Vikings. "You can't have anybody who goes halfway or who will do it tomorrow. We do it today. We get it done."

One of Fleming's teammates on those 1960s Packers teams was center Bill Curry, who, across his career, lived the ups and downs of playing in pro football's biggest game. He suffered an ankle injury in the first half of Super Bowl I and had to watch the victory from the sideline. After that season, Curry was put on the expansion list and claimed by the New Orleans Saints, who promptly traded him to the Baltimore Colts. With the Colts, Curry played in Super Bowl III under Shula, but was on the wrong side of history when the New York Jets pulled off one of the sport's greatest upsets.

Perry Knotts/AP Images

Al Messerschmidt/AP Images

LeGarrette Blount earned three Super Bowl rings, two as a member of the Patriots (above) and one with the Eagles. Top right: Chris Long (left) and Blount celebrate the Eagles' Super Bowl LII championship. Right: Mark Schlereth provided the blocking for Super Bowl-winning teams in Washington and Denver.

Two years later – with Don McCafferty at the Colts helm – Curry was a part of the Super Bowl V championship team that defeated the Cowboys. Yet even in that game, Curry recalls how poorly the offense played. While recognizing his good fortune to have played in three Super Bowls in his first six NFL seasons, he said he still can't help but feel "selfish" about his personal performances.

"I know it's not right for me to emphasize the negative things," Curry says. "But I'm confessing a weakness in myself. We were lucky enough to win the one where I got hurt, and we had a great defense to win the one where we got hammered around and our offense didn't do our part. But that's what the deal's supposed to be. We're one team."

Curry explains the similarities the 1966 Packers and 1970 Colts possessed.

"It was the types of human beings we had on the coaching staff and on the team," he says. "We had very demanding coaches. We had great leaders. Yes, we had a couple of great players on both of those teams. [But] mostly it was a bunch of guys who refused to let each other down.

"When you get to the fourth quarter of an NFL game, everybody's [drained]. Especially on the hot days or the super cold days. Your basic nature says, 'Hey man, I need to quit, go on home, suck on some oxygen.'

"But you look at your teammate and you don't do it. You can't let him down. It's a great blessing to be part of something like that. All of the teams that play in the big, big games have that."

A team's identity also plays a big part in winning a Super Bowl. Offensive guard Mark Schlereth won three Super Bowls – one with Washington (XXVI) and two with the Broncos (XXXII and XXXIII). The biggest similarity between those teams, Schlereth notes, was how they approached each game in those seasons.

"From day one, we had an identity," he says. "This is what we are, this is what we do. And I don't even care if you know what we're going to do. As a group on offense, we knew going into every game we were going to run the absolute snot out of the football. And we were going to impose our will upon you."

Most recently, defensive end Chris Long and running back LeGarrette Blount achieved another anomaly. They won Super Bowls with two different teams – the New England Patriots and Philadelphia Eagles – in back-to-back seasons. They were teammates with the Patriots in Super Bowl LI for that historic rally to beat the Atlanta Falcons, and a year later played with the Eagles in Super Bowl LII when they defeated the Patriots.

While both the Patriots and Eagles were well coached with great players, there was a big difference between those two teams. The Patriots, as an organization, had been to the Super Bowl seven times since 2001. The Eagles were there for the first time in 13 seasons and only the third time in franchise history.

"The difference between New England and Philly was that it was the first time (the Eagles had won the Super Bowl)," Long said in an interview on NBCSports.com. "So whatever it was like when the Patriots won for the first time, that's what I walked into in Philly."

After Curry's playing days ended, he went on to become a successful college football coach who built programs at Georgia Tech, Alabama, and Kentucky. It gave him even more perspective about what makes a team special. And those things have never changed.

"Sure, a great team has a couple of great players. It usually has a great coach," he says. "And then it has a bunch of guys like me. We're bit players, we know we're lucky to be there, and we refuse to let each other down. And that's the best part. That never leaves you."

***Jason Butt** has covered the Atlanta Falcons since 2018, most recently for the* Atlanta Journal-Constitution. *Previously, he covered the Falcons for* The Athletic.

SINCE 2007, NFL PLAY 60 has served as the league's national youth health and wellness initiative to encourage kids across the country to get physically active for at least 60 minutes a day and fuel the body with nutritious foods. With more than $352 million committed to youth health and fitness through PLAY 60 programming, grants, and awareness campaigns, the NFL, its 32 clubs, and its PLAY 60 partners have provided more than 38 million children the resources they need to boost their activity levels by supporting programs in over 73,000 schools and constructing more than 265 youth fitness zones nationwide.

With the 2020-21 school year unlike any other due to the impact of COVID-19, the NFL and its PLAY 60 partners – including the American Heart Association (AHA), Discovery Education, Fuel Up to Play 60, GoNoodle, and Special Olympics – have teamed up to provide parents, teachers, and students with free digital resources to stay physically active and healthy. These online resources, specifically designed to help students lead healthy lifestyles no matter where they are learning, can be accessed on **NFL.com/PLAY60**.

Fuel Up to Play 60, the leading in-school health and wellness program launched by the NFL and National Dairy Council, which was founded by dairy farmers, in collaboration with the USDA, has empowered students and educators to work together to build healthier schools and students for more than 10 years. With school looking different this year, the program introduced the Fuel Up to Play 60 Homeroom, a digital resource with an assortment of fun videos featuring NFL players and learning activities on health and wellness, a greener planet, and building strong communities. Learn more at **FuelUptoPlay60.com** or download the **Student Zone app.**

The American Heart Association and the NFL have provided free digital programming that delivers physical activity-themed content to students in the classroom and at home. The American Heart Association and the NFL, in collaboration with Discovery Education and GoNoodle, have provided PLAY 60-inspired video content, classroom curriculum, family challenges, and an interactive app that can keep kids active regardless of what format they are experiencing school this year. Rooted in science, the PLAY 60 digital content prioritizes physical and mental wellness to help children create healthy routines and habits that are fun for the whole family.

Special Olympics and the NFL continue to team up to provide athletes of all abilities opportunities to PLAY 60 through virtual exercise videos, with a focus on Unified flag football. Despite delays of reopening in-person sports events across the country due to the pandemic, the NFL, Special Olympics, and NFL clubs have found innovative ways to provide these resources to Special Olympics athletes across our country.

The NFL and its partners are continuing their commitment to the PLAY 60 movement for an active and healthier generation for years to come. To learn more, visit **NFL.com/PLAY60**.

NFL FOUNDATION CONTINUES MISSION IN TIMES OF COVID

THE NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE FOUNDATION IS A NONPROFIT organization dedicated to improving the lives of those touched by the game of football. It represents the 32 NFL clubs and supports the health, safety, and wellness of athletes across all levels, including youth football and the communities that support the game.

The NFL Foundation administers more than 45 grant and recognition programs in support of its mission. This includes: evidence-based youth character, mental wellness, and social emotional learning initiatives; football field refurbishments supporting more than 560 field projects in underserved communities and schools nationwide; championing the development of youth football through funding support of USA Football, the sport's national governing body and a member of the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee; and programming and longitudinal studies with NFL PLAY 60 science and nonprofit partners.

In 2020, the NFL Foundation issued a record number of grants to current and former NFL players to help support their philanthropic efforts, including in the social justice and youth/high school football spaces, as well as NFL club foundations, schools, and nonprofit organizations to support youth and community well-being in areas of need.

The NFL Foundation also helps communities respond to disasters. Last spring, it focused much of its work to help support 10 national nonprofits as they worked to battle the spread of COVID-19 and deliver relief to millions in need. The NFL Foundation helped to facilitate the NFL Draft-A-Thon fundraiser, which raised money to support COVID relief efforts for the American Red Cross, CDC Foundation, Feeding America, Meals on Wheels, Salvation Army, and United Way. Efforts focused on the most vulnerable populations, including students on free and reduced lunch, impoverished communities, the homeless, at-risk elderly populations, and first responders. Funds also helped to support research on the virus. The NFL family – represented by the NFL, NFLPA, owners, clubs, players, partners, and the NFL Foundation – collectively contributed more than $100 million to COVID relief.

Visit **nflfoundation.org** for more information.

SUPER BOWL LEGACY GRANT

Each year, the NFL, via the NFL Foundation, seeks to improve the Super Bowl host community through its Super Bowl Legacy Grant initiative by awarding an annual $1 million grant that is matched by the Super Bowl Host Committee and allocated to nonprofit organizations in the surrounding community.

This year, the Super Bowl Legacy Grant will support *Forever 55*, the Host Committee's primary social legacy initiative representing the everlasting impression that Super Bowl LV will have on the Tampa Bay community.

Forever 55 consists of six pillars that represent identified needs focused on moving the Tampa Bay community Forward. Forever. Together. The six pillars include: First 1,000 Days (Early Childhood Education); Fuel (Food Insecurity); Families (At-Risk, Unsheltered and Veterans); Fitness (Health & Wellness); Future (Sustainability); and Further (Systemic Justice).

This year's grant will support several *Forever 55* initiatives, including programs and resources for at-risk, underprivileged families; a three-year youth mentorship and leadership program in East Tampa spearheaded by the Tampa Bay Buccaneers; the resoLVe action initiative which aims to help eliminate systemic injustice and structural racism through the support of local community organizations focused on community policing and financial literacy; and the *Forever 55* Legacy Grant program designed to help fund a variety of community projects in underserved communities directly related to *Forever 55*'s pillars.

LATINO OUTREACH BROADENS FAN BASE

NFL EN ESPAÑOL

THE NFL CONTINUES TO GROW its platform of customized offerings for its strong and growing base of more than 30 million Latino fans. This diverse programming includes NFL Español channels (Twitter, YouTube, and NFL.com/es), which feature exclusive NFL content highlighting Latino football stories; multi-platform Spanish-language media partnerships with Telemundo, NBC Universo, ESPN Deportes, FOX Deportes, and Entravision; and Latino community outreach efforts throughout the season.

As part of this commitment, the NFL and all 32 clubs recognize Hispanic Heritage Month with a series of special events spanning Weeks 2-6. This season, the NFL continued with the theme of "Feel the Orgullo." In Spanish, "orgullo" means pride. Latino players, fans, and coaches have a strong sense of pride, not only in their culture but in their teams and the NFL. In addition to this theme, the NFL created a campaign named "Latinos Vote," which focused on registering NFL Latino fans to vote in the 2020 election.

This season also marked the fifth year of the league's Fuel Up to Play 60 en español, an evolution of its national flagship program. The platform encourages predominantly Latino communities nationwide to live healthier lifestyles through good nutrition and physical activity. This resource also offers Spanish-language content and materials, extending the reach and access of the program to students, teachers, and families across the country.

For the ninth consecutive year, the NFL has partnered with Hall of Fame offensive tackle Anthony Muñoz to host NFL PLAY 60 Virtual Character Camps, which are focused on offering Latino youth opportunities to play and experience the game of football. The camps' mission is to make a positive impact on youth through teaching football skills, emphasizing exercise, and reinforcing the importance of character in athletics and life.

For NFL news, videos, articles, analysis, and more updates in Spanish, visit **nfl.com/español**.

SUPER BOWL LV BUSINESS CONNECT

NFL BUSINESS CONNECT DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

Super Bowl LV Business Connect is a partnership between the NFL and the Tampa Bay Super Bowl LV Host Committee to link diverse Tampa Bay suppliers to contracting opportunities related to the Super Bowl and provide professional networking and business development programming for all member companies.

The tenacity of these businesses has never been more evident than in the era of COVID-19. It shines through in the work ethic and creativity of independent business owners – including women, minority, LGBTQ+, and veteran business owners – in Tampa Bay who have taken the steps to adapt their business models, recognize new opportunities, and plan their futures with a new normal in mind.

Supported by the Super Bowl LV Business Connect team, more than 200 local diverse businesses have participated in 10 months of virtual professional development workshops and networking events challenging them to rethink their customers' needs and rebuild their businesses by adapting to new ways of delivering services.

Kerrick Williams Photography added a licensed drone team to boost services to the company's architecture and construction clients, while Dena Curbelo's team at Mark Master, Inc. created customized, reusable chair bands to help venues and transportation companies block seating to ensure social distancing.

Meanwhile, Tanya & Matt's Ice Creamiest reworked its entire business plan to remain accessible and safe for its customers.

"We have a small dining room, so we chose to close it back in March," said Kristine Zambito of Tanya & Matt's Ice Creamiest in Tampa. "But we pivoted. We installed a walk-up to-go window, added more pre-packaged items to our offerings, and increased our online ordering by building a number of 'Staying-in' ice cream kits."

These new services kept the company afloat through the challenges of 2020 and inspired a new business model for 2021 and beyond.

The Super Bowl LV Business Connect team also reworked the focus of its programming, adjusting to COVID-19 disruptions. In response to the changing needs of member companies, workshops and events were redesigned to engage members virtually and provide strategies to strengthen businesses, ensuring they are event-ready for the Super Bowl and competitive for future contract opportunities in Tampa Bay.

WALTER PAYTON MAN OF THE YEAR

PRESENTED BY Nationwide®

Considered the league's most prestigious honor, the Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year Award presented by Nationwide recognizes NFL players who have not only exhibited excellence on-the-field, but whose passion to impact lives extends beyond the game and has led them to leave a positive legacy in their communities.

COREY PETERS
ARIZONA CARDINALS

STEVEN MEANS
ATLANTA FALCONS

BRADLEY BOZEMAN
BALTIMORE RAVENS

HARRISON PHILLIPS
BUFFALO BILLS

SHAQ THOMPSON
CAROLINA PANTHERS

JIMMY GRAHAM
CHICAGO BEARS

GENO ATKINS
CINCINNATI BENGALS

MYLES GARRETT
CLEVELAND BROWNS

JAYLON SMITH
DALLAS COWBOYS

JUSTIN SIMMONS
DENVER BRONCOS

TREY FLOWERS
DETROIT LIONS

COREY LINSLEY
GREEN BAY PACKERS

MICHAEL THOMAS
HOUSTON TEXANS

JACOBY BRISSETT
INDIANAPOLIS COLTS

JOSH LAMBO
JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS

TRAVIS KELCE
KANSAS CITY CHIEFS

ALEC INGOLD
LAS VEGAS RAIDERS

ISAAC ROCHELL
LOS ANGELES CHARGERS

ANDREW WHITWORTH
LOS ANGELES RAMS

BYRON JONES
MIAMI DOLPHINS

ERIC KENDRICKS
MINNESOTA VIKINGS

DEVIN MCCOURTY
NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS

DEMARIO DAVIS
NEW ORLEANS SAINTS

DALVIN TOMLINSON
NEW YORK GIANTS

PIERRE DESIR*
NEW YORK JETS
*CURRENTLY WITH BALTIMORE RAVENS

RODNEY MCLEOD
PHILADELPHIA EAGLES

VANCE MCDONALD
PITTSBURGH STEELERS

ARIK ARMSTEAD
SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS

RUSSELL WILSON
SEATTLE SEAHAWKS

MIKE EVANS
TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS

KEVIN BYARD
TENNESSEE TITANS

JONATHAN ALLEN
WASHINGTON FOOTBALL TEAM

Congratulations to the 2020 Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year nominees.

NFL.com/ManOfTheYear

PLATFORMS FOR CHANGE

THE NFL EMBRACES its role in unifying communities and serving as a force for positive change. The league and its teams are committed to implementing consistent and thoughtful responses to societal issues by educating the NFL family, instituting transparent policies, and actively engaging with communities to positively impact society.

Open to all teams and players, the league's Inspire Change social justice efforts include an ongoing acknowledgement of the ways that systemic racism contributes to barriers to opportunity and equality. Its work, in conjunction with teams, players, and the Players Coalition, encompasses programs and initiatives in four key areas: Education; Economic Advancement; Community-Police Relations; and the Criminal Justice System.

The NFL is proud to support the ongoing efforts by its 30 social justice grant partners, addressing everything from bail reform to mentorship for underserved communities. Learn more about its grant partners and ongoing social justice work by visiting **nfl.com/inspirechange**.

In addition, the league focuses its efforts on social issues that include character education, as well as domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking prevention.

All NFL and team employees and personnel – more than 6,000 in total – participated in year seven of social responsibility education during the 2020 season. Additionally, the NFL continues its support for its partners at the National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC) and the National Domestic Violence Hotline (The Hotline).

For more information about the NFL's work on social issues, visit **nfl.com/community**.

ALL IN ON THE ENVIRONMENT

NFL GREEN TEAM The Super Bowl is recognized as the greenest professional sports championship in America – and for good reason. The NFL has been addressing the game's environmental impact since 1993 and has been expanding its efforts ever since, with several initiatives taking place as part of Super Bowl LV.

More than a dozen community greening projects have been implemented in partnership with Keep Tampa Bay Beautiful, the Tampa Bay Super Bowl LV Host Committee, and the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. They include tree plantings, restoration of native habitat, and creation of community gardens, a fruit tree orchard, and pollinator habitat. As part of these efforts, there have been significant mangrove tree plantings, sand dune restorations, and beach cleanups to protect and restore coastal areas around Tampa Bay. Tampa Electric and NFL sustainability partners Verizon, Castrol®, and Oikos Triple Zero supported these projects.

The NFL is working with Force Blue, a group of retired military special ops veterans, to continue restoring a football field-sized section of Florida's endangered coral reef by planting corals that are resilient in the face of a changing climate. The project, "100 Yards of Hope," brings together scientists, researchers, and community partners from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, the University of Miami's Rescue a Reef program, The Florida Aquarium, Phillip and Patricia Frost Museum of Science, SECORE International, NOAA's Coral Reef Conservation program, and Tervis.

In partnership with Force Blue and with support from Pepsi, a project named "Dive 55" is removing marine debris and abandoned fishing gear near the mouth of Tampa Bay that poses hazards to marine life and humans.

Super Kids – Super Sharing, co-sponsored by the Tampa Bay Super Bowl LV Host Committee, Tampa Bay Buccaneers, and Verizon, collected books, sports equipment, games, and school supplies for local children in need.

Extra food from Super Bowl Week events is being collected and donated to people in need in partnership with Feeding Tampa Bay. Reusable materials – décor, carpeting, signs, lumber, and other items – are being collected after Super Bowl events and donated locally for reuse and repurposing.

Waste from Super Bowl events is being reduced through recycling and by using a local "waste-to-energy" facility to turn trash into electricity. Renewable energy certificates (RECs) are being used to offset energy usage at major event facilities.

Please join the NFL Green Team in finding ways to reduce your own impact on the Earth! Learn more at **nfl.com/causes/nfl-green**.

FIELD OF OPPORTUNITY

IN SUPPORT OF THE NFL'S VISION to grow the game of football and engage youth participants, the "Play Football" initiative was launched in 2016.

This year-round program celebrates youth and high school football by connecting the football community and promoting the values of the game. Due to the impact COVID-19 has had on the youth football community, many independent leagues, high school seasons, and Play Football events were delayed or postponed. At the same time, the current global pandemic created an opportunity to evolve how the NFL works with clubs, current and former players (Legends), partners, and football organizations. NFL clubs created virtual platforms to engage with their local markets and provide football-specific skills and drills for athletes to perform virtually.

In addition to supporting youth and high school football athletes and coaches, the NFL continued to implement the Way to Play platform, which promotes proper playing technique and protects players from unnecessary risk. The NFL continued to support this program by developing content and resources to help players and coaches improve football fundamentals and by highlighting proper playing techniques and performances through national media.

Reigning Champs Experiences (RCX) expanded its NFL FLAG strategy through the development of new partnerships and initiatives, including the creation of a youth e-sports tournament for NFL FLAG participants and the expansion of league infrastructure and operations of the first women's flag football competition, governed by the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA). Additionally, Subway agreed to become the official sponsor of NFL FLAG.

Learn more about the Play Football initiative by visiting **playfootball.com** and join the conversation on social media using **#PLAYFOOTBALL**.

madd
NO MORE VICTIMS

MADD, NFL SEEK MORE MVPs

As recently as 2019, drunk and drugged drivers claimed 10,142 lives and injured more than 300,000 others. MADD and the NFL understand those numbers are unacceptable and remain focused on one number: Zero.

Zero deaths. Zero injuries. Zero families impacted by impaired driving.

Since 2010, Mothers Against Drunk Driving and the NFL have worked together to eliminate drunk and drugged driving.

Over the past five years, more than one million NFL fans have taken the Most Valuable Position (MVP) pledge to be a designated driver on gameday and any time plans involve alcohol.

Additionally, the NFL works with MADD to increase league and team staff awareness of the dangers of drunk and drugged driving as part of the NFL's annual Social Responsibility education. During the 2020 preseason, the MADD team – in partnership with the NFL's Player Engagement department – created an online training module to educate and drive awareness about the risks of drunk and drugged driving. NFL rookies learned how to protect themselves and others from the violent and dangerous consequences of driving impaired, riding with an impaired driver, and to always have a plan to get home safely.

"MADD is committed to our partnership with the National Football League, and we firmly believe that the Most Valuable Position on and off the field is the designated driver," said Adam Vanek, CEO of MADD. "Together, the NFL and MADD are working to create a future of No More Victims®."

PLAY FOOTBALL

IS THE NFL'S YEAR-ROUND INITIATIVE THAT CELEBRATES YOUTH AND HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL BY CONNECTING THE FOOTBALL COMMUNITY AND PROMOTING THE VALUES OF THE GAME.

VISIT PLAYFOOTBALL.COM
TO LEARN MORE
PARKVIEW
PANTHERS
NFL FLAG
VISIT
NFLFLAG.COM
TO SIGN UP
RAVENS
18
RAVENS
25
RAVENS
14
RAVENS
9

RAMS
GUIDELINES FOR ENTRY
ALL VISITORS MUST COMPLETE SCREENING PROCESS
COMPLETE SCREENING QUESTIONNAIRE PRIOR TO ENTERING

PROTECTING PLAYER HEALTH AND SAFETY

WHEN THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC EMERGED in the United States in early 2020, the NFL and the NFL Players Association (NFLPA) promptly began working together to prepare for an unprecedented NFL season. The NFL and NFLPA created a joint COVID Medical Advisory Task Force comprising medical experts and clinicians from across disciplines and across the country, and also collaborated with infectious disease experts, public health authorities – including the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) – and medical experts from other leagues around the world.

These experts advised the league and the Players Association on the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and recommended medical and science-based solutions. Their recommendations on a wide variety of COVID-19 risk mitigation strategies – robust screening and testing; isolation and exposure mitigation; contact tracing; treatment and management; disinfection and equipment; return-to-participation and acclimation; and medical ethics – formed the basis of the NFL and NFLPA's jointly aligned COVID-19 protocols for the 2020 season.

The NFL and NFLPA expected and prepared for positive tests among the team environment so long as the virus remained prevalent in society. From the outset, a top priority has been to identify, isolate, and treat any positive individual in an effort to stop the spread of the virus and seek to ensure that any necessary medical treatment is received.

While no set of protocols can completely eliminate the risk of contracting COVID-19, the protocols have been carefully developed and are based on the most current information from leading experts. Throughout the season, the protocols have continuously evolved as medical and scientific knowledge of the virus continues to grow.

By the end of the 2020 season, more than one million COVID-19 tests will have been administered among the NFL's players, coaches, and other personnel. The NFL has continuously shared to the CDC and broader medical community the findings from its testing program – notable because it is a geographically diverse, largely asymptomatic population – for the benefit of society as a whole.

To learn more about the NFL's COVID-19 protocols and ongoing work to build a better game, visit **NFL.com/PlayerHealthandSafety.**

INNOVATIONS LEADING THE WAY

While much of the 2020 season has been focused on combatting COVID-19, the NFL's efforts to diagnose, prevent, and treat injuries to advance the health and safety of its players is as active as ever. Examples of the many programs at work this season include:

- In partnership with Amazon Web Services, the league began using machine learning and artificial intelligence to take its data-driven insights to the next level. These technologies are helping to develop new tools and generate deeper and better-informed insights into player injuries, including additional changes to on-field rules, better equipment, and new rehabilitation strategies geared to help predict and prevent injuries before they happen.
- In 2019, the league launched the two-year NFL Helmet Challenge, an innovation challenge that aims to stimulate the development by experts, innovators, and helmet manufacturers of a new helmet that outperforms all helmet models currently worn by NFL players. In June 2020, the league awarded $1.37 million in funding to support four teams in the development of their helmet prototypes, and the challenge will culminate in July 2021 when those teams and other applicants submit their prototypes for laboratory testing for the opportunity to win the $1 million prize.
- Work to diagnose, prevent, and treat lower extremity injuries in the NFL also continued in 2020, including the development of a lower extremity injury reduction plan, similar to the concussion injury reduction plan put in place several years ago.

GOOD MORNING FOOTBALL

KICK OFF YOUR MORNING
WEEKDAYS 7AM ET
NFL NETWORK

NFL NETWORK

GOOD MORNING FOOTBALL

WEEKDAYS 7AM ET

NFL TOTAL ACCESS

WEEKNIGHTS 7PM ET

NFL FREE AGENCY FRENZY

PATH TO THE DRAFT

NFL MOCK DRAFT LIVE

NFL SCHEDULE RELEASE

HERE FOR FOOTBALL

COMING THIS SPRING

INSIDE TRAINING CAMP LIVE

NFL The TOP 100★

PRO FOOTBALL HALL OF FAME ENSHRINEMENT

A FOOTBALL LIFE

NFL 360

PLAYER CARE FOUNDATION

NFL PLAYER CARE FOUNDATION

The NFL Player Care Foundation (PCF) is an independent foundation created in 2007 through a partnership among NFL owners, the NFL Players Association, the Pro Football Hall of Fame, and the NFL Alumni Association.

PCF is dedicated to helping former NFL players improve their quality of life by addressing a broad spectrum of needs, including financial assistance, medical support, career placement, cardiovascular health, prostate health, mental health, and more.

PCF is proud to partner with one of the nation's premier medical providers, Tulane University School of Medicine, to conduct its Healthy Body & Mind Screening program. This complimentary national program is available to all former NFL players and includes cardiovascular, prostate, and mental health screenings.

During Super Bowl Week, PCF is hosting its 3rd Annual Career Fair, a virtual event for 2021, where former players will have the opportunity to meet and interview with recruiters from more than 25 national employers.

Since its inception, PCF has provided over $19.6 million to former players in need through financial grants, disaster relief, and mental health resources. Additionally, PCF has screened over 6,200 retired players and has identified numerous life-threatening medical issues that were addressed immediately. The Foundation provides these programs and services with diversity, equity, and inclusion as a guiding principle in its work.

To learn more about the NFL Player Care Foundation, visit **nflplayercare.com** or email **Dana.Lihan@NFL.com**.

Tulane University SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

NFL ALUMNI

CRUCIAL CATCH

NFL CRUCIAL CATCH INTERCEPT CANCER

THE NFL, ITS CLUBS, PLAYERS, AND THE AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY are committed to the fight against cancer. Crucial Catch addresses the early detection and risk reduction for multiple types of cancer, and is committed to addressing the unequal burden of cancer in underserved, high-risk communities.

Since 2009, this partnership has raised more than $22 million in support of the American Cancer Society and its mission to save lives, celebrate lives, and lead the fight for a world without cancer. Money raised through the Crucial Catch initiative funds grants that help people in underserved communities receive potentially lifesaving screening resources.

With the NFL's support, the American Cancer Society's Community Health Advocates implementing Nationwide Grants for Empowerment and Equity (CHANGE) program has awarded grants to more than 100 health system partners to address cancer prevention, early detection, and timely access to follow-up care. In 2020, over $1 million was awarded to health systems in 18 NFL markets to support underserved communities with a CHANGE grant that addresses the significant drop in cancer screenings due to COVID-19. Screenings have fallen by over 90 percent for some cancers, and this grant has provided resources to help at-risk families get screened. The 12-year partnership has led to over one million people impacted, particularly in high-risk communities.

Throughout October, NFL games featured multi-colored Crucial Catch branding on the field and in stadiums to represent multiple cancers – including breast, colorectal, lung, cervical, prostate, and childhood – all to provide education and raise awareness of how cancer has impacted the lives of people in our communities on many levels.

As part of the Crucial Catch initiative, the NFL and American Cancer Society continue to provide individuals nationwide with access to The Defender, a free digital assessment tool that helps consumers better understand and reduce their cancer risk. The tool provides users with personalized, quick, and informative recommendations on how they can take action and adapt their lifestyles to reduce their risk of cancer.

To learn more about these efforts, visit **nfl.com/crucialcatch**.

Donnie Edwards

NFL SALUTE TO SERVICE AWARD PRESENTED BY USAA

The Salute to Service Award presented by USAA annually recognizes NFL players, coaches, personnel, and Legends nominated by NFL clubs who demonstrate an exemplary commitment to honoring and supporting the military community.

Nominees are evaluated based on the positive effect of the individual's efforts on the military community, the type of service conducted, the thoroughness of the program, and the level of commitment.

Team nominations are submitted in October, and the award is presented during Super Bowl Week and recognized at the *NFL Honors* awards show.

First presented in 2011, recent recipients include current Bills and former Falcons wide receiver Andre Roberts (2017), 49ers center Ben Garland (2018), and former Chargers linebacker Donnie Edwards (2019).

A total of $50,000 is donated in the recipient's name, including $25,000 from USAA to the aid societies representing all military branches and $25,000 from the NFL to the award recipient's military charity of choice.

USAA, Official NFL Salute to Service Partner, honors and appreciates active duty military, veterans, and their families by creating unique opportunities that bring the military community and the NFL closer together. Examples include USAA's Salute to Service Virtual Lounge, a series of live-streamed virtual chalk talks featuring top NFL talent exclusively for military, and USAA's Salute to Service Sweepstakes, which offered military NFL fans the opportunity to win a virtual interaction with an NFL star and a high-tech fan cave during the 2020 season.

To learn more about this year's Salute to Service Award nominees, visit **nfl.com/salute**.

SALUTE TO SERVICE

THE NFL'S SALUTE TO SERVICE is the league's year-round effort to Honor, Empower, and Connect with our nation's service members, veterans, and their families. The league works with its core military charitable partners, including the Pat Tillman Foundation, TAPS, USO, the Bob Woodruff Foundation, and Wounded Warrior Project, to fund programs and provide resources that positively impact veterans, active duty military, and their families.

Since 2011, more than $44 million has been raised through Salute to Service to support the league's military charitable partners.

HONORING THE SERVICE AND SACRIFICE OF MILITARY MEMBERS AND THEIR FAMILIES

Throughout the year, the NFL, its clubs, and players honor and recognize service members, veterans, and their families at NFL events.

The NFL partners with TAPS to fund programs that support the families of fallen military service members. Thousands of survivors can access youth and mentor programs and services to support all those grieving the loss of a military loved one. Through the partnership, more than 5,000 survivors who are part of TAPS have been able to participate in NFL events and honor their fallen loved one(s).

EMPOWERING THE MILITARY COMMUNITY THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS AND RESOURCES

By partnering with organizations that support service members, veterans, and their families, the NFL uses its platform and resources to create a positive impact for our nation's heroes.

- To help honor leaders who exemplify Pat Tillman's enduring legacy of service, the NFL partners with the Pat Tillman Foundation, providing more than $20 million in academic scholarships and lifelong leadership development for nearly 700 Tillman Scholars.
- The NFL partners with Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP) to provide over 185,000 wounded veterans and family support members access to free programs and resources in mental health, career counseling, and long-term rehabilitative care.
- In 2019, the NFL and the Bob Woodruff Foundation (BWF) established an $8 million, three-year partnership designed to optimize the positive impact that the NFL and its 32 clubs have on the veteran community by leveraging BWF's expertise in finding, funding, and shaping programs that deliver measurable results. To date, BWF has invested over $5 million in 33 best-in-class organizations supporting post-9/11 veterans and their families through the NFL-BWF partnership.

CONNECTING THROUGH THE SHARED LOVE OF FOOTBALL

The NFL brings service members and their families together through their shared love of football and provides opportunities for those serving to connect with one another.

For more than 50 years, the NFL has supported the USO and its mission to strengthen service members by keeping them connected to family, home, and country. Since 2007, NFL players and coaches have traveled on USO tours to 27 countries to meet and thank more than 97,000 service members.

For more information on these programs, please visit **nfl.com/salute**.

IT TAKES ALL OF US TO ADVANCE SOCIAL JUSTICE

INSPIRE CHANGE

NFL

THE NFL FAMILY IS COMMITTED TO ACTIONS THAT ADVANCE SOCIAL JUSTICE AND MOVE US TOWARD A MORE EQUAL AND JUST TOMORROW

JOIN NFL PLAYERS, CLUBS, AND THE LEAGUE IN ENSURING THAT ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITY IS A REALITY FOR ALL.

LEARN MORE AT NFL.COM/INSPIRECHANGE

Danny Karnik/AP Images

Russell Wilson was again delivering big for the Seahawks, earning NFC Offensive Player of the Week honors twice in the first three weeks.

SEAHAWKS SOAR IN SEPTEMBER

Wilson directs team's potent offense, adds to career accomplishments

SEATTLE'S PERFECT START TO THE 2020 SEASON evoked memories of another season in the Pacific Northwest that ended perfectly: 2013, when the Seahawks also charged out of the gate 4-0 and went on to capture Super Bowl XLVIII.

Yet while defense was a cornerstone of the '13 squad, a big reason for this year's strong start was QB Russell Wilson and an offense averaging more than 35 points per game. Wilson's 16 touchdown passes matched the NFL record – first set by Peyton Manning in 2013 – for a player in his first four games of a season. Five of those scoring strikes came in a 38-31 win over Dallas in Week 3, the final one a 29-yarder to DK Metcalf with 1:47 remaining that erased a one-point deficit.

Wilson put another entry into the record book in a Week 1 victory at Atlanta, joining Hall of Famer Steve Young as the only players with at least 30,000 career passing yards and 4,000 career rushing yards. He was named the NFC Offensive Player of the Week following both those contests.

"Obviously for us to be 4-0, it's a huge thing," said Wilson, who also owned a league-best 136.7 passer rating. "Just keep winning one game at a time, and that's what's really important to us – making sure that we're staying on schedule, making sure we can keep doing what we're doing."

Even with their perfect mark, the Seahawks didn't have much breathing room in the competitive NFC West. All four division teams stood at .500 or better through four weeks, while across the NFL, six teams remained unbeaten. Joining Seattle at 4-0 were Buffalo, Green Bay, and Kansas City; Pittsburgh and Tennessee stood at 3-0.

WEEK 1

Comebacks contributed to a thrilling Kickoff Weekend, as seven teams rallied to victory after trailing in the fourth quarter. The Bears' win may have been the most dramatic. Mitchell Trubisky threw three touchdown passes over the final 15 minutes, the last of those a 27-yarder to Anthony Miller with 1:54 to play, to bring his team back from a 17-point deficit against Detroit to prevail, 27-23. ... Observing social distancing protocols, a crowd of 15,895 was on hand for the defending Super Bowl champion Chiefs' season-opener at Arrowhead Stadium, where they took a 34-20 decision over the Texans. Kansas City allowed an early touchdown, but moved ahead for good on Patrick Mahomes' 2-yard scoring pass to Sammy Watkins late in the second quarter. Mahomes would total three TD passes in the win, while rookie Clyde Edwards-Helaire rushed for 138 yards and a touchdown. ... Drew Brees outdueled Tom Brady in a battle of the two leading passers in NFL history, throwing for 160 yards and two touchdowns to pace the Saints' 34-23 win over the Buccaneers. ... Packers cornerback Jaire Alexander became the fifth player in the past 21 seasons to register a sack, an interception, and a

***In 2020, teamwork** took on a new meaning across the NFL. With the league, its 32 clubs, and the NFLPA working hand-in-hand with medical and health care experts, protocols and best practices were put in place to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic and keep players, staff, and fans safe. On the field, we saw big comebacks, brilliant performances, and a bevy of milestones that made for an extraordinary season.*

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Early-season highlights from the 2020 campaign included (clockwise, from top right): Aaron Jones' 168-yard rushing effort in the Packers' Week 2 win over Detroit; Chiefs chairman/CEO Clark Hunt honoring the team's Super Bowl LIV victory before this year's opener; the Cardinals' DeAndre Hopkins leading the NFL with 39 receptions through four games; and Myles Garrett's five sacks and two fumble recoveries helping propel the Browns to a 3-1 start.

safety in the same game, accomplishing the feat in Green Bay's 43-34 win over Minnesota.

WEEK 2

Among the 11 teams to improve to 2-0 were the Raiders, who opened Allegiant Stadium with a 34-24 win over the Saints. Derek Carr completed 28 of 38 passes for 284 yards and three TDs, his favorite target being Darren Waller (12 receptions, 105 yards), whose 1-yard scoring catch early in the third quarter put Las Vegas ahead to stay. ... The Ravens won their 14th consecutive regular-season game, with Gus Edwards contributing 73 of the team's 230 rushing yards in a 33-16 victory over the Texans. ... Dallas became the third team in the past 15 seasons to overcome a two-score deficit in the final two minutes and win in regulation. Trailing the Falcons 39-30, Dak Prescott's third rushing TD of the day, a 1-yard run with 1:49 remaining, pulled the Cowboys close, and after C.J. Goodwin recovered an onside kick, Greg Zuerlein converted a 46-yard field goal as time expired for the 40-39 victory. ... Josh Allen threw for 415 yards and four TDs to help the Bills edge the Dolphins, 31-28. ... Kyler Murray carried the Cardinals past Washington, 30-15, throwing for 286 yards and a touchdown, and rushing for 67 yards and two scores.

WEEK 3

Philip Rivers became the sixth NFL player to throw 400 touchdown passes, reaching the milestone as part of 17-of-21, 217-yard day during the Colts' 36-7 victory over the Jets. ... Stephen Gostkowski's sixth field goal of the game, a 55-yarder with 1:44 to play, lifted the Titans to a 31-30 win at Minnesota. It was the third straight week he kicked a game-winning field goal in the final two minutes of regulation. ... Nick Foles' three fourth-quarter touchdown passes rallied the Bears past the Falcons, 30-26. ... James Conner's 12-yard scoring run with 6:24 to play proved the difference in the Steelers' 28-21 victory over Houston. ... NFL history was made in Cleveland's 34-20 win over Washington, where for the first time a female coach was on each sideline and there was a female game official: Callie Brownson (chief of staff for Browns head coach Kevin Stefanski); Jennifer King (intern and offensive assistant for Washington); and Sarah Thomas (down judge). ... Patrick Mahomes made history of his own in a 34-20 win over the Ravens, reaching 10,000 career passing yards in his 34th game, eclipsing the NFL mark of 36 games set by Kurt Warner more than two decades ago.

WEEK 4

With their 26-10 win over the Patriots, the Chiefs became the first NFL team to start at least 4-0 in four consecutive seasons. ... Tom Brady became just the third NFL quarterback with 30 career games of at least four TD passes, throwing five in the Buccaneers' 38-31 victory over the Chargers. ... Joe Burrow, meanwhile, became the first rookie QB with at least 300 passing yards in three straight games, reaching that total exactly in the Bengals' 33-25 win over Jacksonville. ... Odell Beckham Jr. accounted for 154 scrimmage yards (81 receiving, 73 rushing) and three touchdowns (two receiving, one rushing) in the Browns' 49-38 win at Dallas. ... Aaron Rodgers threw four TD passes, three to Robert Tonyan, as the Packers topped the Falcons, 30-16.

SCORES

WEEK 1

KANSAS CITY 34, Houston 20
Seattle 38, ATLANTA 25
BALTIMORE 38, Cleveland 6
BUFFALO 27, N.Y. Jets 17
Las Vegas 34, CAROLINA 30
Chicago 27, DETROIT 23
JACKSONVILLE 27, Indianapolis 20
Green Bay 43, MINNESOTA 34
NEW ENGLAND 21, Miami 11
Washington 27, PHILADELPHIA 17
L.A. Chargers 16, CINCINNATI 13
NEW ORLEANS 34, Tampa Bay 23
Arizona 24, SAN FRANCISCO 20
L.A. RAMS 20, Dallas 17
Pittsburgh 26, N.Y. GIANTS 16
Tennessee 16, DENVER 14

WEEK 2

CLEVELAND 35, Cincinnati 30
CHICAGO 17, N.Y. Giants 13
DALLAS 40, Atlanta 39
GREEN BAY 42, Detroit 21
INDIANAPOLIS 28, Minnesota 11
Buffalo 31, MIAMI 28
San Francisco 31, N.Y. JETS 13
L.A. Rams 37, PHILADELPHIA 19
PITTSBURGH 26, Denver 21
TAMPA BAY 31, Carolina 17
TENNESSEE 33, Jacksonville 30
ARIZONA 30, Washington 15
Baltimore 33, HOUSTON 16
Kansas City 23, L.A. CHARGERS 20 (OT)
SEATTLE 35, New England 30
LAS VEGAS 34, New Orleans 24

WEEK 3

Miami 31, JACKSONVILLE 13
Chicago 30, ATLANTA 26
BUFFALO 35, L.A. Rams 32
CLEVELAND 34, Washington 20
Tennessee 31, MINNESOTA 30
NEW ENGLAND 36, Las Vegas 20
San Francisco 36, N.Y. GIANTS 9
PHILADELPHIA 23, Cincinnati 23 (OT)
PITTSBURGH 28, Houston 21
INDIANAPOLIS 36, N.Y. Jets 7
Carolina 21, L.A. CHARGERS 16
Detroit 26, ARIZONA 23
Tampa Bay 28, DENVER 10
SEATTLE 38, Dallas 31
Green Bay 37, NEW ORLEANS 30
Kansas City 34, BALTIMORE 20

WEEK 4

Denver 37, N.Y. JETS 28
CAROLINA 31, Arizona 21
Indianapolis 19, CHICAGO 11
CINCINNATI 33, Jacksonville 25
Cleveland 49, DALLAS 38
New Orleans 35, DETROIT 29
Minnesota 31, HOUSTON 23
Seattle 31, MIAMI 23
TAMPA BAY 38, L.A. Chargers 31
Baltimore 31, WASHINGTON 17
L.A. RAMS 17, N.Y. Giants 9
Buffalo 30, LAS VEGAS 23
Philadelphia 25, SAN FRANCISCO 20
GREEN BAY 30, Atlanta 16
KANSAS CITY 26, New England 10

Byes: *Pittsburgh, Tennessee*

Don Wright/AP Images

Chase Claypool provided a big boost to the Steelers' offense, scoring seven touchdowns – five receiving and two rushing – through seven games.

STEELERS SUPER AT MIDSEASON

7-0 mark puts Pittsburgh atop AFC North, matches best start in franchise history

STANDING ALONE AS THE NFL'S FINAL UNBEATEN TEAM AFTER eight weeks, the Pittsburgh Steelers were starting to stir memories of 1978. That season, they also won their first seven games en route to a 14-2 finish and the Super Bowl XIII title. Pittsburgh kept its perfect mark intact by rallying for a 28-24 victory over the Ravens in Week 8. QB Ben Roethlisberger drove the comeback by completing 17 of 22 passes after halftime for 158 yards and a pair of touchdowns, including the game-winner to rookie receiver Chase Claypool midway through the fourth quarter, and safety Minkah Fitzpatrick preserved the outcome with a pass breakup in the end zone on the final play.

"It is good today, but it means nothing for tomorrow," cautioned Steelers head coach Mike Tomlin, who won his 140th game to move past Tony Dungy as the winningest Black coach in NFL history. "The total mentality of it is, regardless of these experiences, we have to continue to be a group that is on the rise. And understand that the bigger challenges and the bigger opportunities are in front of us."

That win came on the heels of a Week 7 battle against unbeaten Tennessee. Pittsburgh dominated in the key metrics – outgaining the Titans (362 yards to 292), holding an advantage in time of possession (36:37 to 23:23), and converting 13 of 18 third-down opportunities – and also prevailed on the scoreboard, 27-24.

In Week 5, the Steelers captured a Keystone State clash against the Eagles, 38-29, sparked by Claypool, who caught seven passes for 110 yards and three TDs and also ran for a score. The defense, meanwhile, shined in a 38-7 win over Cleveland in Week 6. Pittsburgh recorded four sacks and a pair of interceptions, one of those a pick-six by Fitzpatrick for the team's first touchdown.

Pittsburgh stood a half-game ahead of the Chiefs (7-1) in the race for the AFC's top seed, while Seattle (6-1) sported the NFC's best record.

WEEK 5

Derek Carr threw for 347 yards and three touchdowns, and Jeff Heath grabbed a late interception, leading the Raiders past the Chiefs, 40-32, for their first win at Arrowhead Stadium since 2012. ... The Saints raced back from a 17-point deficit to upend the Chargers, 30-27, in overtime. Taysom Hill's 9-yard TD run with less than a minute remaining pulled New Orleans even, and Wil Lutz kicked a 36-yard field goal in overtime for the winning points. ... Aaron Donald and Troy Reeder combined for seven sacks to key the Rams' 30-10 win at Washington. ... Baker Mayfield threw a go-ahead 15-yard TD pass to Rashard Higgins, and Ronnie Harrison later returned an interception 47 yards for a touchdown, boosting the Browns over the Colts, 32-23. ... Brandin Cooks caught eight passes for 161 yards, including a 28-yard touchdown, to help the Texans win their first game of the season, 30-14, over the Jaguars. ... Ryan Tannehill threw three TD passes and ran for another score to spark the Titans' 42-16 decision over the Bills.

WEEK 6

With the Colts rallying from 21 points down to defeat Cincinnati, 31-27, the 2020 season became the first in league history in which at least one team had overcome a deficit of 16-or-more points and won in each of the first six weeks. It was also the NFL's largest regular-season comeback since 2016. Philip Rivers led the charge, throwing for 371 yards and three touchdowns, the last of those a 14-yard toss to Jack Doyle early

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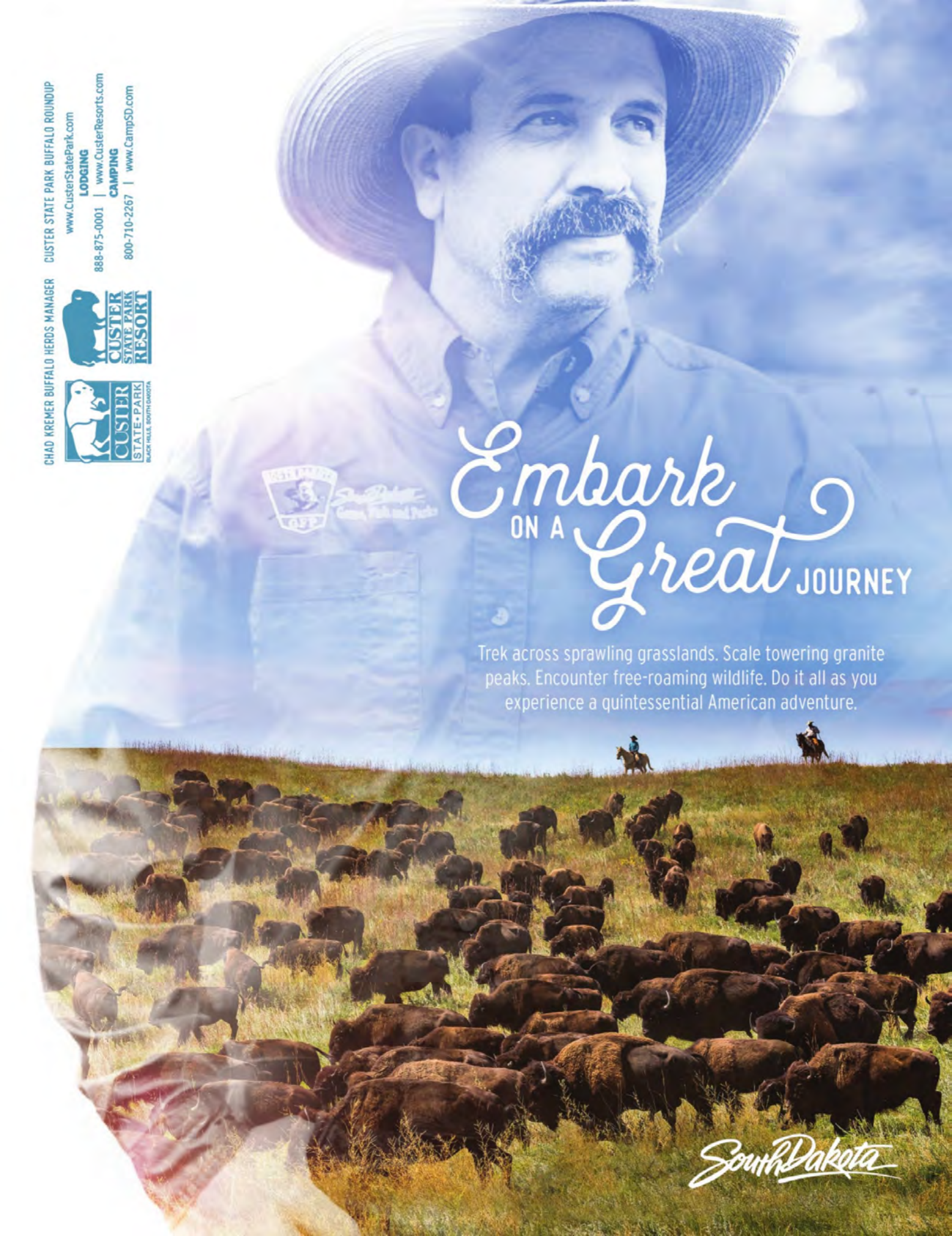
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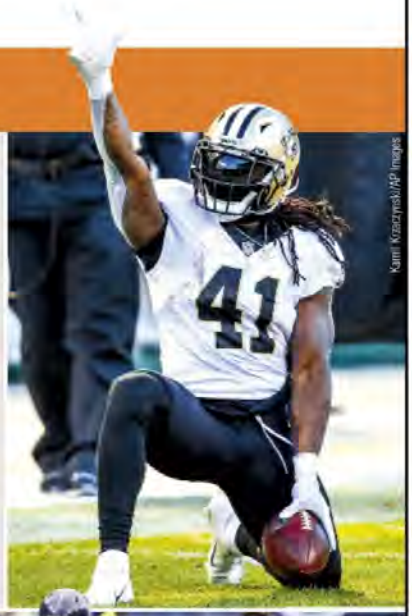


Among the top performers over the first half of the 2020 season were (clockwise, from left): Tom Brady, who threw 20 TD passes as part of the Buccaneers' 6-2 start; Saints running back Alvin Kamara, who had 55 receptions and totaled a league-leading 987 yards from scrimmage and seven touchdowns through seven games; and Derrick Henry, who rushed for 212 yards in the Titans' Week 6 victory over Houston. Bottom left: The league-wide "NFL Votes" campaign encouraged participation in the 2020 Presidential election.

"WHEN YOU PLAY [SEATTLE], WHICH IS THE HIGHEST-SCORING TEAM IN THE LEAGUE AND THEIR QUARTERBACK IS PHENOMENAL, IT'S ABOUT TAKEAWAYS... AND WE MADE THEM AT CRUCIAL POINTS. WHEN THE GAME WAS ON THE LINE, WE SHOWED UP THE BIGGEST."

- CARDINALS COACH KLIFF KINGSBURY, ON HIS TEAM'S WEEK 7 WIN OVER THE SEAHAWKS

in the fourth quarter that put his team ahead for good. ... Derrick Henry totaled 264 scrimmage yards (212 rushing, 52 receiving) and two rushing touchdowns, one on a 94-yard run, in the Titans' 42-36 overtime win over Houston. ... Denver's Brandon McManus converted all six of his field goal attempts, including 52- and 54-yarders, in the Broncos' 18-12 win at New England. ... Jamel Dean's 32-yard interception-return touchdown started the Buccaneers' scoring in their 38-10 victory over the Packers.

WEEK 7

Baker Mayfield threw five touchdown passes, capped by a 24-yarder to Donovan Peoples-Jones with 11 seconds remaining in regulation, to rally the Browns to a 37-34 win at Cincinnati. ... Detroit's Matthew Stafford and Philadelphia's Carson Wentz also had game-winning TD passes in the final minute of play. Stafford's 11-yard scoring throw to T.J. Hockenson came with no time left on the clock as the Lions edged the Falcons, 23-22; Wentz lofted an 18-yard pass to Boston Scott with 40 seconds to play to give the Eagles a 22-21 victory over the Giants. ... Justin Herbert threw for 347 yards and three TDs in the Chargers' 39-29 win over the Jaguars, and joined Cam Newton as the only quarterbacks in NFL history with at least 1,500 passing yards in their first five starts. ... Davante Adams caught 13 passes for 196 yards and two TDs to spark Green Bay's 35-20 win over the Texans.

WEEK 8

Dalvin Cook amassed 226 scrimmage yards (163 rushing, 63 receiving), with three TDs rushing and one receiving, in the Vikings' 28-22 win at Green Bay. ... After trailing by as many as 21 points, the Broncos raced back to edge the Chargers, 31-30, on Drew Lock's 1-yard TD pass to KJ Hamler and Brandon McManus' PAT with no time remaining. ... Patrick Mahomes threw for 416 yards and five touchdowns, two of those to Tyreek Hill, in the Chiefs' 35-9 grounding of the Jets. ... Russell Wilson passed for 261 yards and four touchdowns – giving him 26 TDs on the season, the second-most in NFL history through seven games – as Seattle topped the 49ers, 37-27. ... Zack Moss rushed for two TDs and defensive tackle Justin Zimmer forced a late fumble that safety Dean Marlowe recovered, preserving the Bills' 24-21 win over the Patriots.

SCORES

WEEK 5

CHICAGO 20, Tampa Bay 19
Carolina 23, ATLANTA 16
BALTIMORE 27, Cincinnati 3
HOUSTON 30, Jacksonville 14
Las Vegas 40, KANSAS CITY 32
Arizona 30, N.Y. JETS 10
PITTSBURGH 38, Philadelphia 29
L.A. Rams 30, WASHINGTON 10
Miami 43, SAN FRANCISCO 17
CLEVELAND 32, Indianapolis 23
DALLAS 37, N.Y. Giants 34
SEATTLE 27, Minnesota 26
NEW ORLEANS 30, L.A. Chargers 27 (OT)
TENNESSEE 42, Buffalo 16

***Byes:** Denver, Detroit, Green Bay, New England*

WEEK 6

Chicago 23, CAROLINA 16
INDIANAPOLIS 31, Cincinnati 27
Detroit 34, JACKSONVILLE 16
Atlanta 40, MINNESOTA 23
N.Y. GIANTS 20, Washington 19
Baltimore 30, PHILADELPHIA 28
PITTSBURGH 38, Cleveland 7
TENNESSEE 42, Houston 36 (OT)
TAMPA BAY 38, Green Bay 10
SAN FRANCISCO 24, L.A. Rams 16
Denver 18, NEW ENGLAND 12
MIAMI 24, N.Y. Jets 0
Arizona 38, DALLAS 10
Kansas City 26, BUFFALO 17

***Byes:** Las Vegas, L.A. Chargers, New Orleans, Seattle*

WEEK 7

PHILADELPHIA 22, N.Y. Giants 21
Detroit 23, ATLANTA 22
Cleveland 37, CINCINNATI 34
Green Bay 35, HOUSTON 20
NEW ORLEANS 27, Carolina 24
Buffalo 18, N.Y. JETS 10
WASHINGTON 25, Dallas 3
ARIZONA 37, Seattle 34 (OT)
Kansas City 43, DENVER 16
San Francisco 33, NEW ENGLAND 6
Tampa Bay 45, LAS VEGAS 20
Pittsburgh 27, TENNESSEE 24
L.A. CHARGERS 39, Jacksonville 29
L.A. RAMS 24, Chicago 10

***Byes:** Baltimore, Indianapolis, Miami, Minnesota*

WEEK 8

Atlanta 25, CAROLINA 17
BUFFALO 24, New England 21
CINCINNATI 31, Tennessee 20
Las Vegas 16, CLEVELAND 6
Indianapolis 41, DETROIT 21
Minnesota 28, GREEN BAY 22
KANSAS CITY 35, N.Y. Jets 9
MIAMI 28, L.A. Rams 17
New Orleans 26, CHICAGO 23 (OT)
SEATTLE 37, San Francisco 27
PHILADELPHIA 23, Dallas 9
Pittsburgh 28, BALTIMORE 24
DENVER 31, L.A. Chargers 30
Tampa Bay 25, N.Y. GIANTS 23

***Byes:** Arizona, Houston, Jacksonville, Washington*

David Becker/AP Images

Patrick Mahomes had the Chiefs on the path to a fifth straight AFC West title. Through 11 games, he led the league in passing yards and ranked third in TD passes.

CHIEFS CHASING ANOTHER CROWN

Defending Super Bowl champs show they have what it takes to repeat

SPARKED BY THE RED-HOT PLAY of quarterback Patrick Mahomes, the Kansas City Chiefs came out victorious in a series of close contests to improve to 10-1 and position themselves for a run at a second consecutive Super Bowl title.

A 27-24 victory at Tampa Bay in Week 12 was the team's sixth in a row and pushed its lead in the AFC West to four games. Against the Buccaneers, Mahomes became the first player in NFL history with at least 30 completions and 300 passing yards in four straight games, accomplishing the feat as part of a 37-of-49, 462-yard day.

At the other end of many of those Mahomes aerials was Tyreek Hill, who topped 200 receiving yards before the first quarter was over and finished the game with 13 catches for 269 yards and three TDs.

One week earlier, Kansas City used a last-minute march to defeat the Raiders and avenge its only loss of the season. After a Jason Witten touchdown catch put Las Vegas ahead, Mahomes drove Kansas City 75 yards in seven plays, capped by his 22-yard scoring pass to Travis Kelce with 28 seconds remaining for the 35-31 victory.

"I'd take [Mahomes] over everybody," Chiefs coach Andy Reid said following the game. "And I'm lucky to have him, as we are as a football team, as we are as a city. When you're behind, he can make things happen."

In Week 9's 33-31 victory over Carolina, Mahomes threw for four touchdowns, including the 100th of his career. He reached the milestone in just his 40th game, supplanting Dan Marino (44 games) as the fastest player to reach 100 TD passes in league history. The win was the 230th in Reid's coaching career, putting him alone in fifth on the NFL's all-time list.

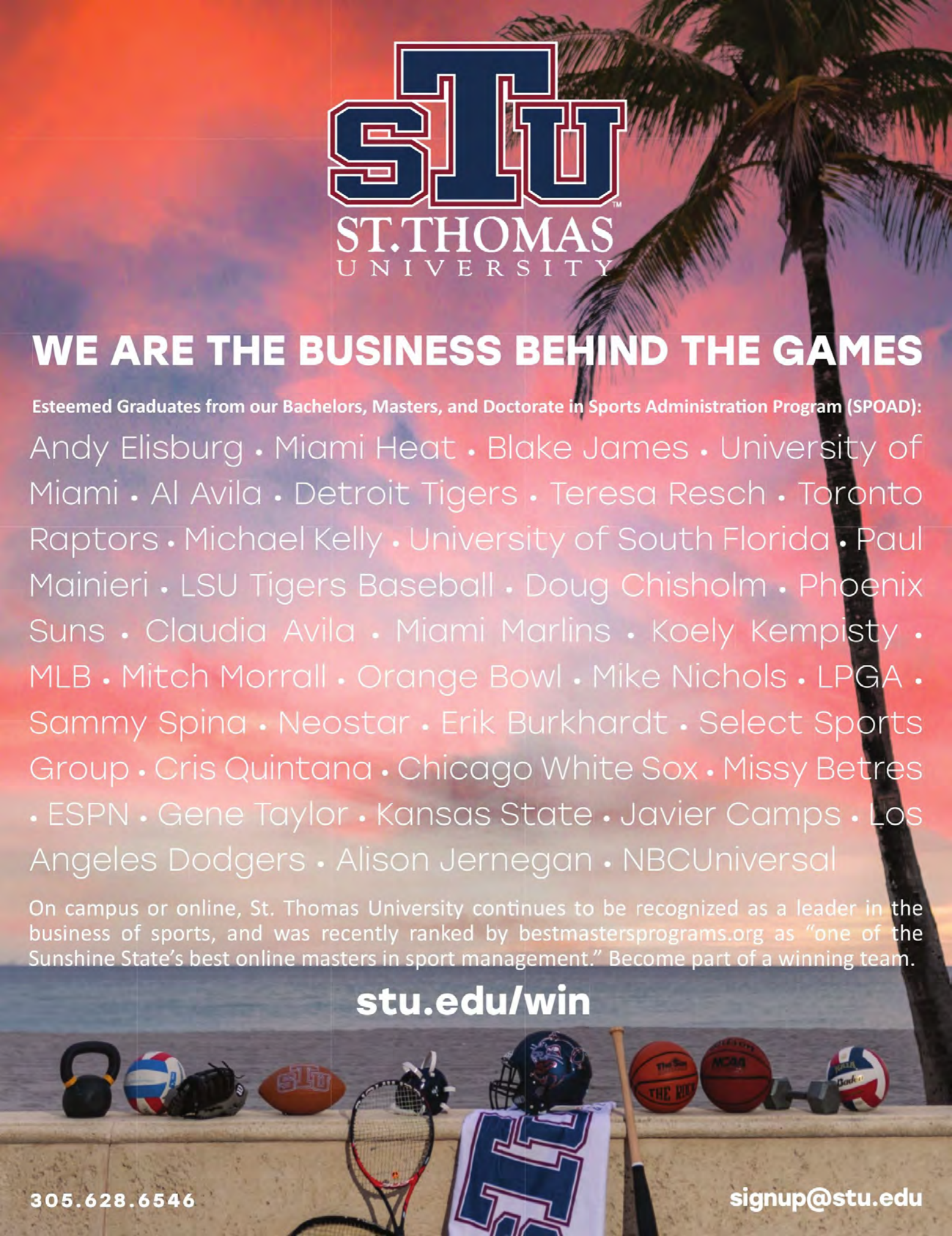
Despite its impressive run, Kansas City remained a game behind undefeated Pittsburgh in the race for the AFC's top seed. New Orleans (9-2) owned the NFC's best mark.

WEEK 9

The Steelers rallied from a 13-point deficit to upend Dallas, 24-19, and improve to 8-0 for the first time in franchise history. Ben Roethlisberger's third TD pass of the game, an 8-yard throw to Eric Ebron with 2:14 remaining, put Pittsburgh ahead to stay. ... Chuck Clark returned a fumble 65 yards for a touchdown and Lamar Jackson and Gus Edwards chipped in with rushing TDs in the Ravens' 24-10 win over the Colts, helping Baltimore set an NFL record by scoring 20-or-more points in 31 consecutive regular-season games. ... Josh Allen starred in the Bills' 44-34 win over Seattle, throwing for 415 yards and three touchdowns and adding a rushing TD. ... J.J. Watt recorded his 100th career sack in the Texans' 27-25 victory over Jacksonville. ... Dalvin Cook rushed for 206 yards and two TDs to lead the Vikings past Detroit, 34-20, and become the first player since Emmitt Smith in 1994 to record a rushing TD in each of his first seven games of the season.

WEEK 10

Kyler Murray keyed the Cardinals' 32-30 victory over Buffalo, rushing for a pair of scores and throwing the game-winning 43-yard touchdown pass to DeAndre Hopkins with only two seconds remaining. He also became the first NFL quarterback in the Super Bowl era to rush for a TD in five consecutive games. ... Alvin Kamara scored three touchdowns – two rushing and one receiving – in the Saints' 27-13 victory over the 49ers. ... Ronald Jones II's 192-yard rushing day included a 98-yard touchdown run as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Standouts efforts around the NFL came from (clockwise from above): Stefon Diggs, who gave the Bills' offense a downfield threat; the Vikings' Dalvin Cook, who had an NFL-best 13 rushing TDs through 12 weeks; the Rams' Aaron Donald, who had 10 sacks in 11 games; and Deshaun Watson, who threw four TD passes in the Texans' Thanksgiving Day win at Detroit.

"IT WAS LIKE HE NEVER STOPPED GOING UP. HE JUMPED AND JUST KEPT LEVITATING. IT WAS LIKE A SUPER MARIO DOUBLE BOUNCE."

– BROWNS QB BAKER MAYFIELD, DESCRIBING KAREEM HUNT'S 5-YARD TOUCHDOWN RUN VS. THE EAGLES IN WEEK 11

Tampa Bay doubled up Carolina, 46-23.... Matt Prater's 59-yard field goal as time expired lifted the Lions over Washington, 30-27. ... Rex Burkhead caught two TD passes, including a go-ahead 24-yarder from wide receiver Jakobi Meyers, to help the Patriots upend the Ravens, 23-17. ... Josh Jacobs and Devontae Booker each rushed for two touchdowns in the Raiders' 37-12 win over Denver.

WEEK 11

Terrell Edmunds and Minkah Fitzpatrick each intercepted two passes as part of the Steelers' 27-3 win at Jacksonville, helping Pittsburgh become the first team since 2015 (Carolina, New England) to open the season with 10 consecutive wins. ... Keenan Allen caught 16 passes for 145 yards and a touchdown in the Chargers' 34-28 triumph over the Jets. ... Deshaun Watson threw for 344 yards and two TDs and ran for another score to direct the Texans past the Patriots, 27-20. ... Olivier Vernon registered three sacks, one resulting in a safety, and Sione Takitaki brought back an interception 50 yards for a touchdown in the Browns' 22-17 win over the Eagles. ... Jared Goff threw for 376 yards, Matt Gay kicked a tie-breaking 40-yard field goal, and Jordan Fuller made it all stand with a late interception as the Rams edged Tampa Bay, 27-24.

WEEK 12

Antonio Gibson rushed for 115 yards and three touchdowns to carry Washington to a 41-16 victory over the Cowboys. ... Kirk Cousins threw for 307 yards and three TDs, two of those to Justin Jefferson, to help the Vikings fend off Carolina, 28-27. In that contest, the Panthers' Jeremy Chinn became the third player in NFL history with multiple fumble-return touchdowns in a single game. ... With their 27-25 win over the Jaguars, the Browns improved to 8-3 for the first time since 1994. Baker Mayfield's two touchdown passes and Nick Chubb's 144 rushing yards keyed the win. ... Wayne Gallman rushed for 94 yards and a touchdown, Graham Gano kicked four field goals, and Leonard Williams recovered a late fumble that allowed the Giants to edge Cincinnati, 19-17. ... Green Bay scored TDs on its first three possessions en route to a 41-25 win over Chicago, its 100th series win in the league's oldest rivalry.

SCORES

WEEK 9

Green Bay 34, SAN FRANCISCO 17
ATLANTA 34, Denver 27
BUFFALO 44, Seattle 34
Baltimore 24, INDIANAPOLIS 10
Houston 27, JACKSONVILLE 25
KANSAS CITY 33, Carolina 31
MINNESOTA 34, Detroit 20
TENNESSEE 24, Chicago 17
N.Y. Giants 23, WASHINGTON 20
Las Vegas 31, L.A. CHARGERS 26
Miami 34, ARIZONA 31
Pittsburgh 24, DALLAS 19
New Orleans 38, TAMPA BAY 3
New England 30, N.Y. JETS 27

***Byes:** Cincinnati, Cleveland, L.A. Rams, Philadelphia*

WEEK 10

Indianapolis 34, TENNESSEE 17
Tampa Bay 46, CAROLINA 23
CLEVELAND 10, Houston 7
DETROIT 30, Washington 27
GREEN BAY 24, Jacksonville 20
N.Y. GIANTS 27, Philadelphia 17
PITTSBURGH 36, Cincinnati 10
ARIZONA 32, Buffalo 30
LAS VEGAS 37, Denver 12
L.A. RAMS 23, Seattle 16
NEW ORLEANS 27, San Francisco 13
NEW ENGLAND 23, Baltimore 17
MIAMI 29, L.A. Chargers 21
Minnesota 19, CHICAGO 13

***Byes:** Atlanta, Dallas, Kansas City, N.Y. Jets*

WEEK 11

SEATTLE 28, Arizona 21
Tennessee 30, BALTIMORE 24 (OT)
CAROLINA 20, Detroit 0
CLEVELAND 22, Philadelphia 17
HOUSTON 27, New England 20
INDIANAPOLIS 34, Green Bay 31 (OT)
Pittsburgh 27, JACKSONVILLE 3
NEW ORLEANS 24, Atlanta 9
WASHINGTON 20, Cincinnati 9
Dallas 31, MINNESOTA 28
Kansas City 35, LAS VEGAS 31
DENVER 20, Miami 13
L.A. CHARGERS 34, N.Y. Jets 28
L.A. Rams 27, TAMPA BAY 24

***Byes:** Buffalo, Chicago, N.Y. Giants, San Francisco*

WEEK 12

Houston 41, DETROIT 25
Washington 41, DALLAS 16
ATLANTA 43, Las Vegas 6
BUFFALO 27, L.A. Chargers 17
N.Y. Giants 19, CINCINNATI 17
Tennessee 45, INDIANAPOLIS 26
Cleveland 27, JACKSONVILLE 25
MINNESOTA 28, Carolina 27
NEW ENGLAND 20, Arizona 17
Miami 20, N.Y. JETS 3
New Orleans 31, DENVER 3
San Francisco 23, L.A. RAMS 20
Kansas City 27, TAMPA BAY 24
GREEN BAY 41, Chicago 25
Seattle 23, PHILADELPHIA 17
PITTSBURGH 19, Baltimore 14

As winter arrived, it was Aaron Rodgers who heated up. He threw 19 TD passes and just one interception during the Packers' season-ending six-game winning streak.

PACKERS SHARP IN PLAYOFF PUSH

Season-closing six-game winning streak lands Green Bay NFC's top seed

SAVING THEIR BEST FOOTBALL for the stretch run, the Packers captured the NFC North crown and earned the conference's coveted No. 1 seed, finishing with a 13-3 record.

They achieved the latter by defeating the Bears, 35-16, in Week 17. Aaron Rodgers threw four touchdown passes in the win and finished the season with a league-leading and career-high 48, joining Peyton Manning as the only NFL players ever to throw for 45-or-more touchdowns multiple times.

There were other milestones along the way. In a 30-16 win over the Eagles in Week 13, Rodgers threw his 400th career TD pass, reaching that mark in 193 games, faster than anyone in league history. He also tossed four touchdowns to lead Green Bay past playoff-bound Tennessee, 40-14, in Week 16.

"This is a special season," Rodgers said. "It's such a difficult time for so many people. I've really just tried to have a good perspective, an attitude of gratitude, and really just enjoy every moment of this season."

Davante Adams played a big part in the Packers' success as well, setting a franchise record with 115 receptions and catching 18 touchdown passes, tied for the third-most by a wide receiver in NFL annals.

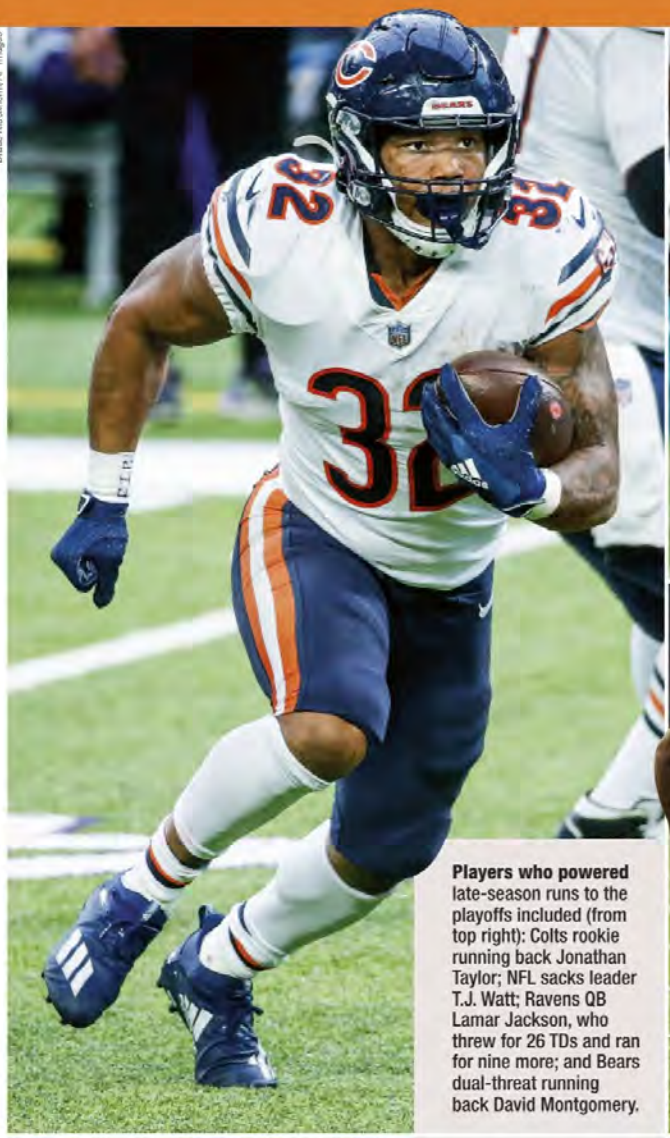
"The job is not done," cautioned safety Adrian Amos, after the Packers earned a first-round playoff bye to gain a leg up in pursuit of their first Super Bowl appearance in 10 years and the sixth in franchise history. "We put ourselves in this situation to conquer the ultimate goal. This is just the next step in that journey."

WEEK 13

Alex Smith threw for 296 yards, Dustin Hopkins kicked a tie-breaking 45-yard field goal, and Jon Bostic grabbed a game-clinching interception as Washington dealt the Steelers their first loss of the season, 23-17, and moved into a first-place tie in the NFC East. ... Detroit scored twice in a 41-second span late in the fourth quarter to defeat the Bears, 34-30. Matthew Stafford threw a 25-yard TD pass to Marvin Jones to pull the Lions within three, and after a John Penisini fumble recovery, Adrian Peterson ran 5 yards for the game-winning touchdown with 1:37 to play. ... In the Raiders' 31-28 win over the Jets, Darren Waller became the first tight end in 18 seasons with at least 200 receiving yards and two TD catches in a game. ... Baker Mayfield's four first-half touchdown passes directed the Browns past the Titans, 41-35. ... Gunner Olszewski brought back a punt 70 yards for a touchdown and Devin McCourty returned a blocked field goal 44 yards for another score as part of the Patriots' 45-0 shutout of the Chargers. ... Justin Houston registered three sacks, one of those resulting in a safety, to power the Colts past Houston, 26-20.

WEEK 14

Russell Wilson threw four touchdown passes to pace the Seahawks' 40-3 victory over the Jets. ... Haason Reddick led a dominant defensive effort with five sacks and three forced fumbles as the Cardinals upended the Giants, 26-7. ... Andy Dalton's two TD passes and Aldon Smith's 78-yard fumble-return touchdown carried Dallas past the Bengals, 30-7. ... The Eagles had two 100-yard rushers – Miles Sanders (115 yards,



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Players who powered late-season runs to the playoffs included (from top right): Colts rookie running back Jonathan Taylor; NFL sacks leader T.J. Watt; Ravens QB Lamar Jackson, who threw for 26 TDs and ran for nine more; and Bears dual-threat running back David Montgomery.

"IT'S BEEN AWESOME TO SEE EVERYBODY SO EXCITED FOR ME AFTER THAT LAST KICK. THIS IS NO. 1 FOR SURE (IN TERMS OF BIGGEST KICKS IN MY LIFE). THAT'S THE FIRST LAST-SECOND FIELD GOAL I'VE EVER ATTEMPTED IN MY LIFE."

- TITANS KICKER SAM SLOMAN, ON HIS GAME-WINNING WEEK 17 FIELD GOAL TO DEFEAT HOUSTON AND CLINCH THE AFC SOUTH TITLE

two TDs) and Jalen Hurts (106 yards) – in their 24-21 win over the Saints. ... Cam Akers rushed for 171 yards and Kenny Young brought back a second-quarter interception 79 yards for a touchdown to key the Rams' 24-3 victory over the Patriots. ... Mitchell Trubisky threw three TD passes, David Montgomery scored on an 80-yard run, and the Bears' defense racked up seven sacks in a 36-7 victory over Houston. ... The Ravens and Browns matched a 98-year-old NFL record by combining for nine rushing touchdowns in Baltimore's 47-42 victory.

WEEK 15

Josh Allen threw for two touchdowns and rushed for two more, fueling a 48-19 win over Denver that clinched the Bills' first AFC East title since 1995. ... Justin Herbert's 1-yard scoring run in overtime capped a standout performance (22 of 32 passing, 314 yards, 2 TDs) as the Chargers edged the Raiders, 30-27. ... Philip Rivers threw a pair of TD passes to Zach Pascal, the second of those a 5-yarder with 1:47 remaining, to snap a late tie and give the Colts a 27-20 victory over the Texans. ... In the Cardinals' 33-26 win over the Eagles, Kyler Murray posted his ninth game of the season with both a passing TD and a rushing TD, the most by a player in a single season in NFL history. ... Tom Brady's 46-yard touchdown pass to Antonio Brown midway through the fourth quarter capped a 17-point comeback as Tampa Bay edged Atlanta, 31-27. ... Frank Gore's 100th career touchdown, on a 1-yard run in the third quarter, highlighted the Jets' 23-20 victory over the Rams. ... Mackensie Alexander had six tackles and grabbed an interception that set up a TD in the Bengals' 27-17 win over the Steelers.

WEEK 16

Alvin Kamara matched an NFL record with six rushing touchdowns as the Saints ran past the Vikings, 52-33. ... With their 17-14 victory over Atlanta, the Chiefs locked up the top seed in the AFC playoffs for the second time in three seasons. Travis Kelce had seven receptions for 98 yards and a TD in the win, and became the first tight end in NFL history with at least 100 receptions twice in his career. ... Justin Herbert's 28th touchdown pass of the season broke the NFL rookie record and helped lift the Chargers to a 19-16 win over

Chris Szagola/AP Images

Terry McLaurin's big catches helped the Washington Football Team reel in the NFC East crown. He had a team-leading 87 receptions, four that went for TDs.

Denver. ... Roquan Smith registered two interceptions and a fumble recovery in the Bears' 41-17 victory at Jacksonville. ... Ryan Fitzpatrick had a big fourth quarter, throwing for 182 yards and directing three scoring drives, the last of those ending with Jason Sanders' 44-yard field goal, to lift the Dolphins past the Raiders, 26-25. ... Stefon Diggs had three TD catches as part of a nine-reception, 145-yard performance in the Bills' 38-9 victory over the Patriots. ... Ben Roethlisberger threw second-half touchdown passes to Diontae Johnson, Eric Ebron, and JuJu Smith-Schuster to rally the Steelers from a 17-point deficit and defeat the Colts, 28-24.

WEEK 17

Led by J.K. Dobbins' 160 yards, the Ravens rushed for a franchise-record 404 yards as they handled the Bengals, 38-3. The rushing total was the most by an NFL team in 20 seasons. ... Tom Brady set an NFL record with his 299th career regular-season start and made it a memorable one, throwing for 399 yards and four touchdowns in the Buccaneers' 44-27 win over Atlanta. ... Derrick Henry rushed for 250 yards and two TDs to lead the Titans past Houston, 41-38. He finished 2020 with a league-leading 2,027 rushing yards, becoming the eighth player in NFL history to rush for at least 2,000 yards in a season. ... Jonathan Taylor piled up 253 rushing yards in the Colts' 28-14 victory over Jacksonville, the second-most by a rookie in a game in NFL history. ... Vikings wide receiver Justin Jefferson caught nine passes for 133 yards in his team's 37-35 win over Detroit, finishing the season with an NFL-rookie record 1,400 receiving yards. ... Alex Smith threw touchdown passes to Terry McLaurin and Logan Thomas to lead Washington to a 20-14 victory over the Eagles and clinch the NFC East title.

SCORES

WEEK 13

New Orleans 21, ATLANTA 16
Detroit 34, CHICAGO 30
Indianapolis 26, HOUSTON 20
MIAMI 19, Cincinnati 7
MINNESOTA 27, Jacksonville 24 (OT)
Las Vegas 31, N.Y. JETS 28
Cleveland 41, TENNESSEE 35
L.A. Rams 38, ARIZONA 28
N.Y. Giants 17, SEATTLE 12
GREEN BAY 30, Philadelphia 16
New England 45, L.A. CHARGERS 0
KANSAS CITY 22, Denver 16
Buffalo 34, SAN FRANCISCO 24
Washington 23, PITTSBURGH 17
BALTIMORE 34, Dallas 17

***Byes:** Carolina, Tampa Bay*

WEEK 14

L.A. RAMS 24, New England 3
Denver 32, CAROLINA 27
CHICAGO 36, Houston 7
Dallas 30, CINCINNATI 7
Green Bay 31, DETROIT 24
Tennessee 31, JACKSONVILLE 10
Kansas City 33, MIAMI 27
Arizona 26, N.Y. GIANTS 7
TAMPA BAY 26, Minnesota 14
Indianapolis 44, LAS VEGAS 27
SEATTLE 40, N.Y. Jets 3
L.A. CHARGERS 20, Atlanta 17
PHILADELPHIA 24, New Orleans 21
Washington 23, SAN FRANCISCO 15
BUFFALO 26, Pittsburgh 15
Baltimore 47, CLEVELAND 42

WEEK 15

L.A. Chargers 30, LAS VEGAS 27 (OT)
Buffalo 48, DENVER 19
GREEN BAY 24, Carolina 16
INDIANAPOLIS 27, Houston 20
N.Y. Jets 23, L.A. RAMS 20
TENNESSEE 46, Detroit 25
Tampa Bay 31, ATLANTA 27
BALTIMORE 40, Jacksonville 14
MIAMI 22, New England 12
Chicago 33, MINNESOTA 27
Cleveland 20, N.Y. GIANTS 6
Seattle 20, WASHINGTON 15

WEEK 15 CONTINUED

ARIZONA 33, Philadelphia 26
Kansas City 32, NEW ORLEANS 29
DALLAS 41, San Francisco 33
CINCINNATI 27, Pittsburgh 17

WEEK 16

NEW ORLEANS 52, Minnesota 33
Tampa Bay 47, DETROIT 7
San Francisco 20, ARIZONA 12
Miami 26, LAS VEGAS 25
L.A. CHARGERS 19, Denver 16
N.Y. JETS 23, Cleveland 16
BALTIMORE 27, N.Y. Giants 13
Cincinnati 37, HOUSTON 31
Chicago 41, JACKSONVILLE 17
KANSAS CITY 17, Atlanta 14
PITTSBURGH 28, Indianapolis 24
Carolina 20, WASHINGTON 13
SEATTLE 20, L.A. Rams 9
DALLAS 37, Philadelphia 17
GREEN BAY 40, Tennessee 14
Buffalo 38, NEW ENGLAND 9

WEEK 17

TAMPA BAY 44, Atlanta 27
N.Y. GIANTS 23, Dallas 19
NEW ENGLAND 28, N.Y. Jets 14
Minnesota 37, DETROIT 35
CLEVELAND 24, Pittsburgh 22
Baltimore 38, CINCINNATI 3
BUFFALO 56, Miami 26
Seattle 26, SAN FRANCISCO 23
L.A. RAMS 18, Arizona 7
INDIANAPOLIS 28, Jacksonville 14
Tennessee 41, HOUSTON 38
Las Vegas 32, DENVER 31
L.A. Chargers 38, KANSAS CITY 21
Green Bay 35, CHICAGO 16
New Orleans 33, CAROLINA 7
Washington 20, PHILADELPHIA 14

2020 FINAL NFL STANDINGS

**Division Champion ⁺Wild Card*

AFC EAST	W-L-T	PCT	PF	PA
Buffalo*	13-3-0	.813	501	375
Miami	10-6-0	.625	404	338
New England	7-9-0	.438	326	353
N.Y. Jets	2-14-0	.125	243	457

AFC NORTH	W-L-T	PCT	PF	PA
Pittsburgh*	12-4-0	.750	416	312
Baltimore⁺	11-5-0	.688	468	303
Cleveland⁺	11-5-0	.688	408	419
Cincinnati	4-11-1	.281	311	424

AFC SOUTH	W-L-T	PCT	PF	PA
Tennessee*	11-5-0	.688	491	439
Indianapolis⁺	11-5-0	.688	451	362
Houston	4-12-0	.250	384	464
Jacksonville	1-15-0	.063	306	492

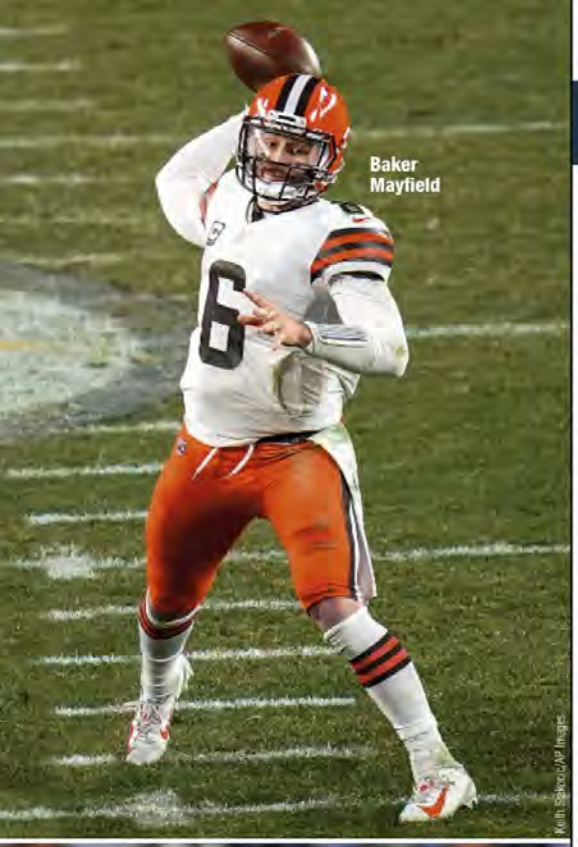
AFC WEST	W-L-T	PCT	PF	PA
Kansas City*	14-2-0	.875	473	362
Las Vegas	8-8-0	.500	434	478
L.A. Chargers	7-9-0	.438	384	426
Denver	5-11-0	.313	323	446

NFC EAST	W-L-T	PCT	PF	PA
Washington*	7-9-0	.438	335	329
N.Y. Giants	6-10-0	.375	280	357
Dallas	6-10-0	.375	395	473
Philadelphia	4-11-1	.281	334	418

NFC NORTH	W-L-T	PCT	PF	PA
Green Bay*	13-3-0	.813	509	369
Chicago⁺	8-8-0	.500	372	370
Minnesota	7-9-0	.438	430	475
Detroit	5-11-0	.313	377	519

NFC SOUTH	W-L-T	PCT	PF	PA
New Orleans*	12-4-0	.750	482	337
Tampa Bay⁺	11-5-0	.688	492	355
Carolina	5-11-0	.313	350	402
Atlanta	4-12-0	.250	396	414

NFC WEST	W-L-T	PCT	PF	PA
Seattle*	12-4-0	.750	459	371
L.A. Rams⁺	10-6-0	.625	372	296
Arizona	8-8-0	.500	410	367
San Francisco	6-10-0	.375	376	390


Baker Mayfield

Keith Srakocic/AP Images

Taron Johnson

John Munson/AP Images

Cam Akers

Kyle Terada/AP Images

PLAYOFF RECAPS

AFC WILD CARD

BUFFALO 27, Indianapolis 24

▸ **Josh Allen threw for 324 yards** and two touchdowns and ran for another score, helping the Bills to their first playoff win in 25 seasons. Allen's 5-yard TD run near the end of the second quarter put Buffalo ahead for good, and after Philip Rivers led a pair of late touchdown drives to get Indianapolis close, Bills safety Micah Hyde knocked down a pass at the goal line on the game's final play to clinch the victory.

Baltimore 20, TENNESSEE 13

▸ **Providing another glimpse** into how many ways he can influence a game, Lamar Jackson led the Ravens back from an early 10-point deficit. He threw for 179 yards and rushed for another 136, highlighted by an electric 48-yard touchdown run that tied the game just before halftime. Marcus Peters' interception with 1:50 remaining stopped Tennessee's final attempt at a comeback.

Cleveland 48, PITTSBURGH 37

▸ **A 28-point first-quarter** carried the Browns to their first postseason road triumph since 1969. Cleveland scored on the game's first play when Karl Joseph tracked down an errant snap for a fumble-recovery touchdown. Kareem Hunt added TD runs of 11 and 8 yards, and Baker Mayfield kept the Steelers' hopes at bay with a 40-yard scoring pass to Nick Chubb early in the fourth quarter.

NFC WILD CARD

L.A. Rams 30, SEATTLE 20

▸ **Cam Akers' 131 rushing yards** included a 5-yard touchdown and Darious Williams brought back an interception 42 yards for another score, leading the Rams to victory. The Rams' defense dominated the game, producing five sacks – including two each by Aaron Donald and Leonard Floyd – and limiting Seattle to 278 total yards and 11 first downs.

Tampa Bay 31, WASHINGTON 23

▸ **Extending his own NFL record** with his 42nd career playoff start, Tom Brady lifted the Bucs to their first postseason win since Super Bowl XXXVII. Brady threw for 381 yards, highlighted by touchdown passes to Chris Godwin and Antonio Brown. Leonard Fournette rushed for 93 yards and provided an insurance TD with his 3-yard scamper in the fourth quarter, and Ryan Succop made field goals from 29, 23, 38, and 37 yards.

NEW ORLEANS 21, Chicago 9

▸ **The Saints were left standing** at the end of this bruising battle, with Alvin Kamara running for 99 yards and a TD, and Michael Thomas and Latavius Murray catching touchdown passes. QB Drew Brees directed second-half touchdown marches that took 7:29 and 8:51 off the clock, while New Orleans' defense yielded just 239 total yards and didn't allow the Bears into the end zone until the game's final play.

AFC DIVISIONAL

BUFFALO 17, Baltimore 3

▸ **Taron Johnson delivered** the game's biggest play, an interception that he returned 101 yards for a touchdown to key the Bills' victory. Buffalo snapped a halftime tie with an 11-play march capped by Stefon Diggs' 3-yard touchdown catch, and when Baltimore appeared ready to answer, Johnson stepped in front of a 3rd-and-goal pass and sprinted untouched up the right sideline. It matched the longest interception-return TD in NFL playoff history.

KANSAS CITY 22, Cleveland 17

▸ **After seizing an early lead,** the Chiefs held on to reach the AFC Championship Game for the third consecutive season. Patrick Mahomes ran for Kansas City's first TD and later threw a 20-yard scoring pass to Travis Kelce, and Harrison Butker added three field goals. The defense then protected the advantage, and a huge 4th-and-1 conversion – on Chad Henne's short pass to Tyreek Hill – allowed the Chiefs to run out the clock.

NFC DIVISIONAL

GREEN BAY 32, L.A. Rams 18

▸ **Answering the call** when his team needed him most, Aaron Rodgers launched a 58-yard TD pass to Allen Lazard to help the Packers put away the Rams. Rodgers earlier threw a touchdown to Davante Adams and ran 1 yard for another score, but the Rams kept up the pressure and closed the gap when Cam Akers took a direct snap and ran 7 yards for a TD. They then forced a punt but couldn't capitalize, thanks in part to a sack by Kenny Clark, and Rodgers followed with his long TD to Lazard.

Tampa Bay 30, NEW ORLEANS 20

▸ **Tom Brady pulled within** one game of his 10th Super Bowl appearance, throwing two TD passes and running for another score. Devin White, Sean Murphy-Bunting, and Mike Edwards each had interceptions for the Bucs, and Antoine Winfield Jr. forced a fumble to set up the game-tying score, a 6-yard Brady-to-Leonard Fournette touchdown pass. Ryan Succop's 36-yard field goal put Tampa Bay ahead to stay.

The AFC Championship Game recap is on page 54.

The NFC Championship Game recap is on page 34.

DON SHULA

THE NFL'S ALL-TIME WINNINGEST COACH WAS A SUPER BOWL FIXTURE.

BY HARVEY GREENE

WHEN SUPER BOWL LV kicks off in Raymond James Stadium in Tampa, it will be watched by millions of viewers around the world. But for the first time in the game's history, Don Shula won't be one of them.

Shula passed away last May at the age of 90, leaving behind a record-setting career, highlighted by coaching the only "perfect" team in the NFL's 101-year history and compiling more career victories than any other head coach in the league.

And win or lose, the Super Bowl was very much a part of that Hall of Fame legacy.

It started more than a half-century ago when Shula, then the head coach of the Baltimore Colts, brought his powerful team to the Orange Bowl to face the upstart New York Jets of the American Football League in Super Bowl III. The Colts were heavy favorites in the game, but quarterback Joe Namath led the Jets to a 16-7 win in one of pro football's greatest upsets ever.

The loss stung, and although it took a while, Shula eventually exacted his revenge.

"I really didn't have many interactions with Coach Shula – until years later when I became a broadcaster and found out he had both a sense of humor and a long memory," Namath recalls. "One day we were flying back to Florida on a charter along with my daughter Jessica, who was around 10 at the time. They started to play a game of gin, and Shula wound up winning. When he did, he turned to me and said, 'Now we're even.'"

Super Bowl III turned out to be a crossroad for both people. The victory propelled Namath to NFL stardom, while the loss was the beginning of the end of Shula's tenure in Baltimore.

Colts owner Carroll Rosenbloom was so discouraged after that defeat that his relationship with his coach began to fray. It didn't take long for it to tear completely, so when the Dolphins contacted Shula following the 1969 season about their vacant head coaching position, he accepted their offer. It was the beginning of a 26-year run of unparalleled success in Miami that set the NFL record book on fire.

But it took another Super Bowl loss to kindle that blaze.

Two years after he took over the Dolphins, Shula was back in the Super Bowl, but the result was the same: a 24-3 defeat, this time to the Dallas Cowboys in Super Bowl VI. The loss, though, proved to be the springboard for the perfection to come.

"Coming off the field, we were upset that we really didn't challenge the Cowboys," quarterback Bob Griese recalls. "And when Shula talked to us in the locker room after the game, he told us to remember that tremendous disappointment next year when we started our preparations for each game, because we're going to have to win every one of them just to get back to where we were three hours ago."

Riding that emotional wave all season long, coupled with great talent and outstanding coaching, the 1972 Dolphins went 17-0. They capped the perfect year with a 14-7 victory over Washington in Super Bowl VII. But becoming the first team in the modern NFL to go undefeated wasn't really their goal, and their historic accomplishment didn't sink in until long after that final game.

"When we opened training camp before the start of the 1972 season, Shula repeated that theme, reminding us that we needed to win every game if we wanted a chance to get back to the Super Bowl and redeem ourselves," fullback Larry Csonka says.

"Did we expect to go undefeated? I don't think anyone, including Shula, expected that to happen. No one had ever done it before. But in the end, that's the way it worked out."

"We didn't even make a fuss about going undefeated in the locker room after the game," Griese adds. "To us, it was just icing on the cake; winning the championship was really our goal. It only got to be a big deal in the years after that when nobody else could do it."

Miami returned to the Super Bowl the following season, losing only two games along the way, and won its second consecutive championship by manhandling the Minnesota Vikings, 24-7, in Super Bowl VIII. The Dolphins were so dominant that they built a commanding 17-0 lead before the Vikings even crossed midfield.

That led many people, including Csonka, the game's MVP, to believe that the 1973 team was every bit as good as the '72 Perfect Season squad.

"The defense in 1972 might have been a

Getty Images

little better, but I think the '73 team had a stronger offense," he says. "We had a better balance between running and passing because Shula knew we could do both extremely well. As a result, offensively we were really able to dominate teams in 1973, and I think you saw that against the Vikings.

"It's hard for me to say which team was better, but I know one thing for sure – we went 32-2 those two years, and no one else has been able to do that."

Shula would bring the Dolphins back to two more Super Bowls, in 1982 on the strength of the "Killer B's" defense, and in 1984 behind a record-setting passing attack led by Dan Marino. And even though the Dolphins came up short in both of those title games, the road they took to get there again showcased Shula's genius.

"In 1982, Shula knew he had a good defense," defensive end Kim Bokamper says, "so he made his offense work in two different ways with two quarterbacks, David Woodley and Don Strock, who had very disparate styles. And Shula made it work well enough for us to get to the Super Bowl."

Two years later, with a totally revamped offense, Shula and Marino unleashed a relentless aerial attack on the league, setting passing records that would stand for years.

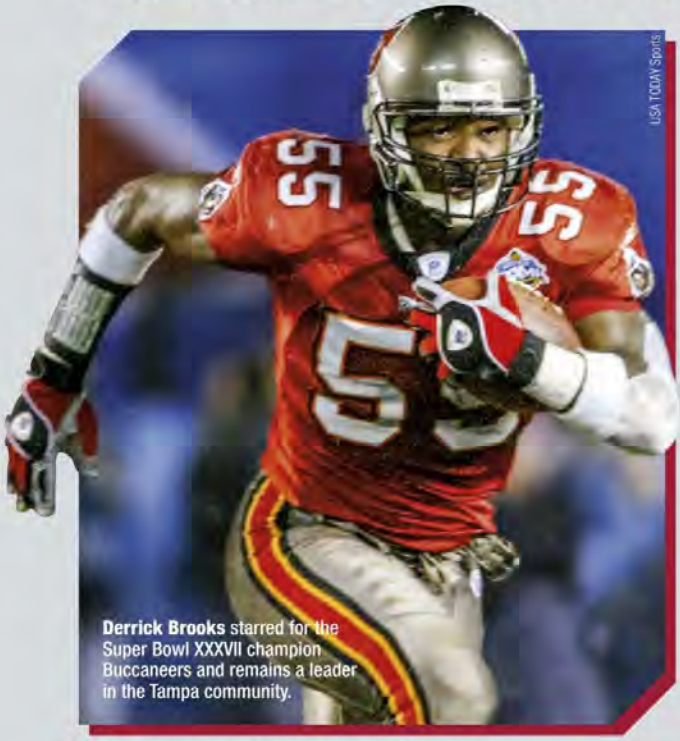
"Coach Shula was pretty conservative most of his career, but he knew the type of talent we had in '84," Marino, then in just his second season, recalls. "So he really opened up our passing game to a point where we were so explosive that people really couldn't prepare for what we threw at them. I give him a lot of credit for that. He knew what we could do, and he gave us the chance to do it.

"We had a great group of guys that year, but fell just short of our goal when we lost to the 49ers in the Super Bowl. I wish that game had a different outcome. To win a Super Bowl with Coach Shula, that would have been something really special."

***Harvey Greene** was the longtime senior vice president of media relations for the Miami Dolphins and in that role worked with Coach Shula for more than 30 years.*

DEAR FOOTBALL...

HOW COULD I HAVE KNOWN I'D COME TO LOVE THIS GAME SO MUCH? BY DERRICK BROOKS



Derrick Brooks starred for the Super Bowl XXXVII champion Buccaneers and remains a leader in the Tampa community.

I WALKED AWAY FROM FOOTBALL without finishing my first practice. It's no fun when you're 7 years old and being used as a tackling dummy.

Yet instead of garnering sympathy, I was given a lesson. My stepfather, A.J. Mitchell, didn't hide his disappointment: "This is the first and last time you start something and not finish. It's not about how good you are. It's about finishing. Always give your best effort, because effort does not cost you anything."

Then he added, "By the way, you owe me $30 for the registration fee."

The money aside, it was a profound lesson that has stayed with me throughout my life. And it's one that my wife, Carol, and I have embraced as parents and passed on to our children Brianna, Decalon, Darius, and Dania.

The next year, I was back on the football field. This time, I didn't quit. I fell in love.

I played my entire career in Florida — at Booker T. Washington High School in Pensacola, collegiately at Florida State, and for 14 seasons as a linebacker with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. The competition at every level brought out the best in my abilities and built character traits that I still apply to my life.

While I earned many individual accolades on the field and ultimately was enshrined in the Pro Football Hall of Fame, the football achievement that stays with me – the achievement that would stay with any player – is winning the Super Bowl. After coming close for several seasons, our 2002 Buccaneers team was fortunate enough to accomplish that in Super Bowl XXXVII.

We were so prepared for that game. Everyone knows the story of Coach Jon Gruden taking on the role of Raiders quarterback Rich Gannon at practice, right down to imitating his pre-snap cadence and signals – and that was a huge advantage for our defense. But as players, we also made a pact: to keep things like a normal game week and allow players to be themselves. The only rule was to not do anything that would be a distraction to the team.

On gameday, everything came together perfectly. Our defense had five interceptions, three that went for touchdowns, including one that I brought back to end the Raiders' hopes for a late comeback. As I ran to the end zone, my only thought was, "Don't fall, don't fall, don't fall."

Thankfully I didn't, and minutes later we were celebrating a Super Bowl championship. The uncompromising efforts of our owners, front office, coaches, and players were all rewarded that afternoon in San Diego. And I remember how much it meant to our fans, and how much it meant to all of us to share it with them.

Even though my playing days are behind me, the love I have for this game continues on. That's because football has provided an opportunity to display my best gift from God: the gift of giving back.

It was through my early outreach efforts to youngsters in the Tampa Bay area that I started Derrick Brooks Charities. Over the past 25 years, we've established scholarships, education programs, and the Brooks Bunch, which takes local youngsters on trips across the globe so they can have a better understanding of the world around them.

Little did I know that this would lead me to start a school. But in 2007, I collaborated with fellow Hall of Famer Eddie DeBartolo Jr. to open Brooks-DeBartolo Collegiate High School, which has educated thousands of students at the highest level so they can fulfill their potential.

Now, as co-chairman of the Super Bowl LV Host Committee, I'm part of a different challenge, but one that's no less important to the people of Tampa Bay. For whether you're playing in the game or here as a fan, we want to make this year's Super Bowl the memory of a lifetime.

Football has changed my life in ways impossible for a discouraged 7-year-old to imagine. And my story could be your story: You never know when you're going to fall in love with something.

***Derrick Brooks** was the 2000 Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year, the 2002 AP NFL Defensive Player of the Year, and a member of the NFL 100 All-Time Team. He was enshrined in the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 2014.*

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